FRAMING FUTURES

Undergraduate Studies Review Committee - A Report

JULY 2018
AMBEDKAR UNIVERSITY DELHI

The art work on the cover page, by Ananya Kushwaha, is an embroidery painting depicting interconnections. The use of the medium itself is a witness to this-the thread and a needle weaves on a piece of a *shibori* hand-dyed cloth forms of life connected with each other. This is the artist's imagination of an undergraduate university programme wherein students can use their learning to connect with each other and with the environment around them. Interconnectedness is not like an aspiration but a fact of life which one must aspire to preserve and treat as sacred because all learning, unless it weaves through this fact, is unaesthetic to life itself. Youth is a life stage which is at the threshold in the cycle of generations. Erik Erikson, the famous psychoanalyst, wrote about the concept of 'mutuality' - that not only society but our own mind functions in some ways like cogwheels, one part moving and being moved by the other. The other concept he spoke about was 'actuality' - our potentiality guided by our unique location in the times, culture, and a social matrix which fuels our inner realities; and also as humans we give shape to the times we live in. The previous generations add on to how we come to be today and how we come to be today guides how we view and shape our older generations and history. In essence, a social science university like AUD is like a universe of possibility for such an appreciation and potential turning of time for our collective situation.

Ananya Kushwaha is a graduate from the first batch of MPhil Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy from Ambedkar University Delhi. She is currently a partner and a full-time practicing psychotherapist with the Psychotherapist Collective, an initiative with 4 friends and colleagues from her MPhil batch at AUD.

**Framing Futures:
The Undergraduate Programme at AUD**

A Report of the Undergraduate Studies Review Committee

23 July 2018

Professor Shyam B. Menon
Vice Chancellor
Dr B.R. Ambedkar University Delhi
Delhi

Dear Professor Menon,

The Undergraduate Studies Review Committee constituted by the University is pleased to submit its report to you. While foregrounding some of the current challenges, the Report also highlights the enormous potentialities that AUD as a progressive higher education institute holds for undergraduate education in the country.

We, as members of the Committee, applaud the vision of the leadership and the commitment of the entire AUD community to carve expansive and progressive pathways for learning, growth and exploration. We hope that our recommendations will prove useful to further these endeavours. We are grateful for the support we received from the AUD community for our work. For us, it was a truly enriching learning experience. Thank you for the opportunity and best wishes for the continued growth and vitality of AUD.

With warm regards.

Yours sincerely,

Meenakshi Gopinath
(Chairperson)

Vanita Shastri
(Member)

Maina Chawla Singh
(Member)

Vijay Tankha
(Member)

Praveen Singh
(Member)

Manasi Thapliyal Navani
(Faculty Secretary)

Table of Contents

Executive Summary

In less than a decade of its establishment in 2008, Ambedkar University Delhi (AUD) has carved an impressive and distinctive niche for itself in the higher education landscape of the National Capital Territory. The growth curve of the University over this crucial phase of development has been remarkable. AUD has established several milestones as an inclusive and democratic pedagogical space providing access and quality education to a heterogeneous group of learners including the hitherto marginalized and excluded populations. As the University expands further within a multi-campus context, undergraduate studies will continue to occupy a central place in the academic planning and envisioning of its future. Almost 47 per cent of the total enrollments in the University are in the undergraduate space at present, and will so remain even as the University expands further towards its projected target of 14,000 students by the year 2023.

The Report, Framing Futures, deals with the challenges facing undergraduate studies at AUD and offers a series of suggestions to cope. In addressing the challenges and possibilities, the Report focuses on the student interface (Chapter 2), the faculty interface (Chapter 3), capacity building opportunities and directions for restructuring undergraduate studies within the multi-campus context (Chapter 4), and posits some additional reflections (Chapter 5) for faculty and administration to build conversations around.

At the core of several challenges facing undergraduate studies at AUD are its organizational structure, faculty deployment, academic rigour and building competencies for the world of work. The organization of teaching-learning within the UG space often appears as a mosaic of incoherent interrelationships and responsibilities, which seem to dilute the original vision and promise of the UG programme – as an innovative template of multidisciplinary learning and a unique context for continuous exploration of emerging contours of learning. A persistent renewal of this compact will continue to characterize AUD's uniqueness even as it explores multi-campus possibilities

In evaluating the **curriculum and learning enrichment** process, it was found that greater attention needs to be paid to curricular practices across the seven UG programmes. A comprehensive assessment process is energy and time intensive, but remains critical to ensure that students learn and acquire core competencies and the desired graduate attributes. More creative ways of framing assessments and planning the assessment process with clear objectives and learning outcomes have also emerged as issues that need remediation (see Chapter 2, p. 28). Commitment to supporting students and mentoring them towards qualitative improvement in their learning trajectory will require a 'dedicated' faculty cohort.

Among the seven undergraduate streams, the **SSH programme** in particular, faces specific challenges emanating from the all-elective nature of the programme. Students of this stream felt "orphaned" since their convenience, priorities and choices were seldom taken on board during scheduling and room-allocation planning. The SSH programme, which although provides a very promising template for a broad-based and interdisciplinary liberal arts education, presently lacks a coherent structure and needs to be revisited. Some additional perspective building courses, a research component, and an interdisciplinary thematic as an organising matrix, could probably imbue it with greater vitality and scope (see pp. 30, 48).

A re-articulation of the **undergraduate-postgraduate interface** is also needed. This interface needs to be articulated from the perspective of enriching students' learning experience. Most of the energy of the faculty seemed to be moving towards strengthening the PG programme, invariably at the cost of the UG space. Greater incentives for senior faculty to engage more proactively with undergraduate teaching may be explored. The Report suggests the institution of a UG-PG **Pro-Seminar** to provide for seamless interface between the undergraduate and postgraduate space, open student choices, and enable the faculty teaching PG courses to offer options to the UG students desirous of pursuing further academic enrichment. It also allows for faculty teaching undergraduate

courses to open their courses for PG students (See Chapter 3, p.52). A more alternative model than those currently in use at AUD for faculty deployment and suggestions therein are elaborated in Chapters 3 and 4 (pp. 55 and pp. 57-58). It is felt that this would respond to the concerns of both, the faculty and the students regarding the need for more robust engagement at the undergraduate space.

An important initiative in higher education has been the emphasis by the government on 'skilling'. With more than a million Indians projected to enter the working age each month for the next decade and a half, universities are entrusted with the task of building both capacity and competency. AUD has stepped into this space, but even as it builds and expands its **B.Voc. programme** at the Karampura campus, it needs to ensure that this does not meet a fate similar to that of the earlier attempts at 'vocationalization' at other institutions of higher education. The traditional approach will only ghettoize and marginalize a programme that has potentialities if imparted appositely by the learning environment and ethos of AUD (see Chapter 4, pp.57).

Exposure to the professional, social and institutional context outside the classroom is as critical for a liberal arts graduate as it is for those opting for the vocational trajectory. Both need to be empowered with competencies and capacities for successfully transitioning to their preferred professional options. **Open channel access** between the vocational and liberal arts courses is desirable for two-way value addition. Like the vocational programmes at AUD, the other undergraduate programmes could also, for the benefit of students, adopt a modular approach allowing for multiple entry, exits and re-entry points. AUD could institute for undergraduate students, Certificates/Diplomas similar to the vocational programme. This can facilitate greater mobility (and recognition of credits acquired) for students who do not fullfill the degree requirements in the stipulated duration. There is also need to find creative ways of interpreting UGC guidelines with respect to the undergraduate and vocational curricula and credit frameworks.

While AUD adopted a choice based credit framework from its inception, the external mandate to adopt the curriculum and credit (CBCS) framework prepared by the UGC with a maximum deviation of 20-30 percent, has created differences and confusion regarding the existing philosophy of credit system at AUD. The UGC articulation of CBCS militates against the spirit of "learner-centred" education as the mandated stipulation of credit hours discounts for any learning outside the didactic space of the classroom. The stipulation also puts at a disadvantage any novel articulation of curriculum or pedagogy. AUD will need to creatively interpret and reformulate practices in light of the constraints imposed by a mandate that limits rather than expands choice. The Report suggests that synchronization between the UGC credit requirements and the CBCS offered at AUD could be brought about by provision of two active tutorials within each course and the tutorials can be formatted creatively between self-study, field or research components, depending upon the capacity and inclination of the student.

The process of setting the bar higher for UG studies would be served by integrating into the curriculum opportunities for building a work profile for undergraduates, introducing research and study-skills workshops, preferably through Foundation Courses, greater institutional support for enabling students to acquire soft-skills, IT competencies, and greater English language proficiency and career-counseling. It appears that *students experience the transition from school to university as relatively easier and smooth, but the transition from the university to the work place* is found more difficult. Sustained counseling and mentoring would assist students make a smooth transition from school to university and beyond to the workplace (see Chapter 2, pp. 27 and Chapter 5, p.75).

With around 60 or so electives (from the different schools that 'service' the UG Programme) and about 17 Foundation Courses (of which three are compulsory and the optional FC has to be chosen out of the remaining courses on offer in the Foundation Optional basket), the

freshman batch confronts a smorgasbord of often 'undecipherable' choices. This cafeteria approach can work optimally in the AUD context only if supported by **active academic advising and mentoring** at every stage of students' progression. A more rigorous template for Academic Advising and Mentoring is eminently desirable. More robust **feedback mechanisms** are also required. The Student Faculty Committee (SFC) needs to be reimagined in the SUS context for more responsive mechanisms for addressing students' needs and grievances (see Chapter 2, p.34).

Progressive and creative methods of **student support** at AUD have contributed in an abundant manner to address the major concerns of access and equity. A large number of undergraduate students have benefitted from the scholarships, fee waivers, and the Earn While You Learn Scheme. A point of concern, however, for undergraduate students is the administrative delay in processing the Student Welfare Fund. The Fund for Learning Enhancement (to which the UG students contribute a significant share) has not been proportionately utilized for undergraduate students (see fig. 2.6). This highlights the lack of proactive "bidding" for grants by the School of Undergraduate Studies. The responsibility for application for funds towards UG programmes needs to be clearly delineated within each programme and vested in a functionary within SUS.

Sustaining a **federating structure** with inter-movement across UG and PG could remain a challenge as the University expands in a multi-campus context. As administration becomes complex, structures that are more responsive to cultural and social heterogeneity will need to be continuously evolved. Clearer incentives may be required for nurturing a critical mass that takes ownership of the UG space (see pp.50-51). Both sections of students and faculty feel that the UG programme has suffered on account of faculty's primary engagement with their parent School and associated PG programmes. Staffing patterns and responsibilities need clearer articulation so as to address concerns of all the Schools in the delivery of the UG courses and to bring on board

focus and concern areas from both, the disciplinary vantage point as well as the changing nature of the employment sector and contingent competencies.

The Report recommends that the **SUS organisational structure** needs to be revisited in order to ensure the <u>centrality of the undergraduate student</u> in the UG planning process. As it exists, the pyramid is very narrow with the Dean SUS, who has little staff support, at the top. Without a 'dedicated' faculty, it will be a challenge to sustain processes of change, introspection, and planning for the future. A faculty dedicated exclusively to the UG space, for a fixed tenure of three years, could provide the core faculty for sustaining the UG programmes (Chapter 3, p.50). Further, the nomenclature of Programme Manager for the Vocational Studies faculty needs to be rethought to keep them aligned to the academic ethos of the University (see Chapter 4, p.56).

The Report suggests that within a **multi-campus context** merely duplicating the Kashmere Gate model and template for undergraduate studies is not desirable. While the original campus continues to provide anchor in the initial phases of development, where necessary, the attempt must be to make each campus 'self-sufficient' with a niche specialty and an ethos that reflects the original mission, but engages with it continually in context specific ways, keeping locale, demographics and the priorities of each student cohort in mind. At the same time a fine balance has to be maintained in order to avoid campus isolation and the perpetuation of an affiliate type of a system (see Chapter 4, pp.64-67).

One possible direction could be to restructure the current School of Undergraduate Studies on principles more relevant to the needs of students, and develop a proactive role for its interface with the newer (and distinctive) UG programmes developed on different campuses. An optional fourth year could be added on for students who wish to add value to their portfolio, by engagement in field study, and being eabled to audit courses across the multiple campuses at AUD. This proposal needs to be pursued with the view of **creative collaborations across**

campuses with appropriate academic oversight and monitoring to facilitate cross-learning. The academic structures should facilitate transportability of new courses/modules offered across campuses into some of the conventional programmes offered at the School of Undergraduate Studies, Kashmere Gate.

The **expansion of undergraduate studies in the multi-campus context** requires meticulous planning with considerable thought, care, and foresight based on learnings from the existing UG experience. The following basic principles may be followed:

➢ Duplication of faculty and programmes across campuses, in the long run, could prove untenable and unsustainable. Reproduction of the Kashmere Gate Campus model for the UG programme would require duplication of Kashmere Gate faculty profile for the new campuses as well. Therefore, replicating the Kashmere Gate SUS UG programmes seems difficult and unfeasible at this point.

➢ The multi-campus model must consciously resist creating a Centre-Periphery sensibility. Each campus could have a unique character with organic linkages between the UG and PG programmes offered at a campus.

➢ The undergraduate programmes offered in the new campuses may be better served if they reflect the interest areas, specialisations and strengths of the faculty appointed to that particular campus. The imprint of the Schools contributing to the UG programmes is desirable in conceptualisation and curricular focus. This would also develop interest among learners in newer disciplines while keeping a balance with the core of traditional disciplines.

➢ It is important to create a sense of rootedness, for both faculty and students, which does not involve shuttling across campuses for different courses. Keeping the PG and UG

courses for a particular disciplinary set at the same location will make it possible to better integrate the programmes and students. Further, the idea of students working within the campus is one that should be explored. This reinforces a sense of belonging and ownership of a campus. A seamless engagement both within and outside the classroom through co-curricular activities could also enable the building of an institutional ethos.

The distinctiveness of the undergraduate programmes at AUD requires that the spirit of social justice continues to inform its courses and pedagogy and that faculty is adequately oriented to this aspect of the teaching-learning process. Much of the faculty recruited into AUD come from UG spaces elsewhere and perceive their move to AUD as an opportunity that allows them mobility into the PG space for teaching, a more research oriented environment, as well as a context to escape the 'rigours' and every day demands of UG teaching. There appears to be a mismatch between faculty aspiration for professional mobility and UG students joining AUD seeking access with equity. Faculty recruitment and induction programmes need to address this issue head on.

Crucial to vitalizing and reinstating the centrality of the UG space in the AUD experience is the need to develop rigorous, in-depth, **induction processes for faculty** appointed/assigned to undergraduate teaching. Given the diversity that AUD reckons with in the undergraduate classroom, the UG space has the potential for becoming a laboratory for **pedagogical innovation for achieving social justice.** Impetus for creative pedagogy and curriculum can emanate from this heterogeneity in terms of the learning needs across students. The Report recommends that AUD's mission statement of bridging access with excellence be foregrounded during the induction process for the new faculty and reiterated consistently while planning for undergraduate teaching.

AUD must better **brand** and advertise itself as a progressive space for inclusive growth that specially caters to the aspirations of young students from the NCT. At present, the absence of a well-planned and

robust **extracurricular** platform and active **field-based engagement** might prove to be an impediment. Extracurricular space for the undergraduates cannot be seen as either a diluted version of PG or as an upgraded version of the practice at school. AUD would do well to address this lacuna by foregrounding the quality of extracurricular engagement as an integral part of learning outside the classroom for the new undergraduate admission seekers (see p.54 & p.60). A more intensive collaboration with civil society organizations could greatly enrich formulation of field-learning for the undergraduate space (like PRADAN has done for the MPhil programme) (see p.13 & p.48).

The vision of AUD as a unique learning community will keep alive the potentiality of a space that can innovatively re-craft undergraduate education for the whole country by melding access and excellence, expanding the horizons of learning, and liberating the mind from the constraints of regimented curricula.

List of Abbreviations

AUD	Ambedkar University Delhi
BoM	Board of Management
CBCS	Choice Based Credit System
CECED	Centre for Early Childhood Education and Development
EAP	English for Academic Purposes
ECCME	Early Childhood Centre Management and Entrepreneurship
ERP System	Enterprise Resource Planning system
FC	Foundation Courses
GE	General Education
HEI	Higher Education Institution
IT	Information Technology
LE	Learning Enhancement
MTR	Mid-Term Review
NAAC	National Assessment and Accreditation Council
NSDC	National Skill Development Council
NSQF	National Skills Qualification Framework
OJT	On-job-training
PG	Postgraduate

PRADAN	Professional Assistance for Development Action
SES	School of Education Studies
SFC	Student Faculty Committee
SHS	School of Human Studies
SLGC	School of Law, Governance and Citizen ship
SLS	School of Liberal Studies
SSR	Self-Study Report
SUS	School of Undergraduate Studies
SVS	School of Vocational Studies
SWF	Student Welfare Fund
ToR	Terms of Reference
UG	Undergraduate
UGC	University Grants Commission
UGRC	Undergraduate Studies Review Committee

"Embedded in the very idea of the university – not the story book ideas, but the university at its truest and best – are values that the market does not honour: the belief in a community of scholars and not a confederacy of self-seekers; in the idea of openness and not ownership; in the professor as a pursuer of truth and not an entrepreneur; in the student as an acolyte whose preferences are to be formed, not a consumer whose preferences are to be satisfied...a radically different view of the university's role in the marketplace of ideas, one that recreates in the virtual world the idea of an intellectual commons".

David L. Kirp (2003, p.7), *Shakespeare, Einstein, and the Bottom Line*

Prologue

I.   Ambedkar University Delhi

In less than a decade of its establishment in 2008, Ambedkar University Delhi (AUD) has carved an impressive and distinctive niche for itself in the higher education landscape of the National Capital Region. Over this crucial phase of development the University has established several milestones as an inclusive, democratic, pedagogical space providing access and quality education to a heterogeneous group of learners including the hitherto marginalized and excluded populations, primarily from the NCR region. In keeping with the highest standards of reflexivity, so necessary for a vibrant, aspirational space of learning, it has consistently engaged in voluntary self-reviews, assessments and evaluations, like undertaking a Mid-Term Review in 2012-2013, and pursuing NAAC Accreditation in 2014, as soon as it became eligible.

Vision, mission and goals

AUD draws inspiration from the life and ideas of Dr BR Ambedkar, and is driven by the primary mission to bridge excellence with equity and social justice through an institutional commitment to engaged scholarship. AUD's institutional mission includes creating sustainable and effective linkages between access to and success in higher education. It is committed to creating and sustaining an institutional culture characterized by humanism, non-hierarchical and collegial functioning, teamwork and creativity. Through its programmes AUD attempted not merely to respond to the demands of the market, but to work for creating leadership for public systems, to work for social transformation through constitutional means and to develop professional capacities in the interface of the civil society and the state.

II.   Undergraduate Studies at AUD

As a unitary university without a system of affiliated colleges, **AUD adopted a unique model for its undergraduate programmes.** The

University attempted to do away with the conventional hierarchy between the undergraduate and graduate level programmes by adopting an organisational structure that required teachers to teach at all levels undergraduate, postgraduate and research (MPhil and PhD). The University created the School of Undergraduate Studies (SUS) to house all the UG programmes without provision for a faculty exclusively to this School. Faculty appointed to other Schools was concurrently appointed to SUS. The concurrent appointment system, in principle, envisioned for a seamless sharing between different Schools, postgraduate and research programmes and the involvement of all the teachers of the University in teaching of the undergraduate programmes.

The UG programme was thus visualised as its pulsating nerve centre—indeed its flagship programme. Initiated in the year 2010, the SUS offers BA Honours programmes with possibilities of majoring in one of seven areas (Economics, Psychology, English, History, Sociology, Mathematics, and Social Sciences & Humanities). Till 2014, SUS also offered students the opportunity of graduating with dual major. Teaching at its Karampura campus began in 2016 with BA Honours programmes with possibilities of majoring in one of four areas (English, Psychology, Economics, and Social Science & Humanities). These were essentially the same set of programmes that were also being offered at the Kashmere Gate campus. The programmes at SUS were designed to equip students with specific disciplinary training within the broader canvas of the social sciences as a whole. In addition to the SUS, the **School of Vocational Studies (SVS)** was established in the year 2017 and offers three vocational programmes at the undergraduate level with multiple entry and exit options that lead to Certificate, Diploma, Advanced Diploma, and Bachelor of Vocation (BVoc) degrees in the domains of Tourism and Hospitality, Retail Management, and Early Childhood Centre Management and Entrepreneurship.

III.   Context of the Undergraduate Studies Review

The development of the University in a multi-campus context has raised a number of concerns and issues around the nature and organisation

of undergraduate studies at AUD. The organisation and the structure of the SUS had earlier emerged as an area of concern during the Mid-Term Review (MTR) process. The MTR Committee (2012-13), for instance, had observed that the structures in place for the governance of SUS were not adequate to the task and had provided a set of recommendations. Further, with the institution of the SVS, the undergraduate studies are no more exclusive to SUS. Several issues have emerged around the envisioning of the Karampura campus in the two years of its functioning. A critical challenge for the campus emerged in terms of offering conventional BA programmes without an organic link with any PG vertical at the Karampura campus. As AUD expands, it is critical to engage with the way the undergraduate space may be envisioned in the academic plans of the University. The Undergraduate Studies Review, consequently, has been instituted with the expectation that the Committee will engage with multiple dimensions of undergraduate studies, its structure, process, the UG space and culture at AUD and provide future directions in the context of the macro policy in which undergraduate education is being reformed and shaped in the country.

IV.   The Undergraduate Studies Review Committee and the Objectives

The Review was instituted when AUD had completed nine years and five months of its existence. The Review Committee, constituted in January 2018, comprised the following members:

1.   Dr. Meenakshi Gopinath, Chairperson

2.   Dr. Vanita Shastri

3.   Dr. Vijay Tankha

4.   Dr. Maina Chawla Singh

5.   Professor Praveen Singh

6.   Manasi Thapliyal Navani, Faculty Secretary

The Review Committee Secretariat was hosted in the Planning Division of the University and assisted by:

1. Radhika Aggarwal (Research Assistant)

2. Richa Shrivastava (Research Assistant)

3. Pankaj Kumar (Technical Officer)

The overall objectives of the Undergraduate Studies Review (UGR) were to:

1. Review the vision and stated objectives of undergraduate education at AUD in the current context of higher education in India;

2. Revisit the recommendations of the Mid-Term Review and NAAC evaluation for undergraduate education and provide recommendations for mid-course adjustment and alignment of the academic programmes and other programmatic/ administrative initiatives;

3. Provide future directions for expansion of undergraduate education at the University.

The specific objectives of the USR were to:

1. Review the framework for undergraduate studies and examine possible directions for restructuring;

2. Advise the University on effective implementation of UG Programmes in the emerging multi-campus context;

3. Review the efficacy of the institutional mechanism for faculty deployment for undergraduate studies;

4. Assess the relevance of the broad academic provisions, pedagogic engagement, and student support mechanisms, and examine their effectiveness in achieving the stated objectives;

5.   Assess the relevance and appropriateness of the Foundation Courses within the UG programmes at AUD;

6.   Identify major constraints and offer alternative approaches for the effective implementation of the academic programmes and activities;

7.   Assess how existing programmes and practices prepare students for future pathways and advise the University on ways of strengthening them.

8.   Suggest approaches to synchronise the vocational programmes with the broader objectives of the UG space.

These objectives were taken as broad guiding principles to define the scope of the Review. The focus was thus anchored to the following aspects: vision and scope of UG studies at AUD, institutional arrangements, broad contours of UG programmes, faculty profile and deployment, plans for expansion, diversification, and student support mechanism.

The Terms of Reference (ToR) acknowledged that the Review is expected to provide strategic directions to the University for the development of the undergraduate domain over the next ten years. The ToR also articulated that the UG Review was not expected to address:

•   a detailed technical evaluation of the undergraduate programmes (curriculum design, course structures, course content, etc.); These are being reviewed through a separate programme review exercise.

V.   Undergraduate Studies Review Process

The Undergraduate Studies Review (UGR) Committee commenced its work formally on 18 January 2018. The meetings of the Committee were held on twelve days spread over five months: 18 January 2018, 6, 18, 19, 20, 21 & 24 February 2018, 7, 8, and 23 March 2018, 4 May

2018, and 30 May 2018. This was a participatory and consultative exercise of engagement with the University community responsible for the undergraduate studies. Consultations began with a meeting of the UG Review Committee with the Vice Chancellor, Dean Planning, Dean (SUS) and Deputy Dean (SUS) to deliberate on the broad contours of the Review. It was agreed that the UGRC should guide AUD in steering Undergraduate Studies towards a future direction, in tandem with the University's plan of expansion. The Review team consulted and engaged with the following segments of the AUD community: a.) Presently enrolled students and the alumni; b.) Academic Coordination Committee for SUS and faculty associated with the BA programme teams at the School of Undergraduate Studies; c.) Faculty of the B.Voc. programmes and students at the School of Vocational Studies; and d.) the Core Management Team. Members of the UGR Committee also attended some of the other stakeholder consultations organised for the Decennial Review Committee. Additionally, surveys with undergraduate students and alumni were also conducted to gauge the overall undergraduate experience, academic and social. Details regarding all such meetings and interactions appear at Annexure A.

The aim was to help AUD identify the major challenges and opportunities in relation to how it envisages the future of its undergraduate programmes within its multi-campus context, in terms of their foci/nature, the linkages with other academic units, and the contribution to the experience and discourse of an enriching, meaningful, and creative undergraduate education in the Indian higher education context. As part of this exercise, it was important to review the core principles of the organization of undergraduate studies at AUD, engage with the perceptions of students, faculty and the senior management; reflect on the dynamics between the undergraduate and postgraduate education at AUD; and locate this within the larger context of undergraduate education in the country. Another critical aim was to explore possibilities of convergence between liberal studies (SUS) and vocational studies (SVS) within the undergraduate space and advise the University to attempt to re-articulate and broaden the discourse on what is conventionally termed 'vocational'.

The Committee adopted an elicitive methodology of extensive feedback from different constituents of the University community. The Report, consequently, has sought to foreground their 'voice', so that it 'speaks' largely from the perspective of those who will eventually initiate and be impacted by any meaningful process of reform and change. The Committee's attempt has been to add as few filters as possible. In the spirit of the 'flipped' classroom that AUD subscribes to, the Committee has tried to speak in a different voice — it is not about analysis alone but about 'voice' as well. This Report presents a series of engagement points within each rubric with observations and suggestions for the faculty and administration to build conversations around. Across the chapters, the Committee has articulated areas of concern and made recommendations as deemed necessary. Certain aspects of undergraduate education have also been highlighted for more in-depth reflection.

VI.   Acknowledgements

The Committee expresses its deep appreciation for the leadership and vision of the Vice Chancellor, Professor Shyam Menon whose repeated insistence on a candid and dispassionate review, and to "hold the mirror up" was as unusual as it was inspirational. The integrity that enables leadership to be open to "constructive criticism" and "critical feedback" is rare today, yet necessary. It is a celebration of the democratic impulse-the only antidote to organizational sclerosis. We remained enthused by his transparency and commitment to the mission of AUD.

Our deep gratitude to the core management team of AUD, in particular, Professor Salil Misra (Pro Vice Chancellor), Professor Jatin Bhatt (Pro Vice Chancellor), Professor Asmita Kabra (Registrar), Professor Sanjay Sharma (Dean, Student Services), Professor Geetha Venkataraman (Dean, Assessment, Evaluation and Student Progression), and Dr. Arindam Banerjee (Dean, Academic Services), for their unstinted support throughout the process of review. Special thanks to Professor Tanuja Kothiyal, Dean, SUS, for her insights, candour and for sharing

the organizational and structural challenges confronted in the execution and delivery of a robust UG programme at AUD.

Thanks are due to Radhika Aggarwal, Richa Shrivastava, and Pankaj Kumar (UGRC Secretariat), and the Planning Division: Anshu Singh (Assistant Registrar), Sameer Khan (Junior Executive) and Shiv Charan (MTS), for so patiently attending to all our requests and providing assistance. We appreciate the support of the AUD internal core-committee for assisting with data and tools for the review process. This internal core-committee included Dr Jyotirmoy Bhattacharya, Dr Rohit Negi, Dr Nidhi Kaicker, Dr Shad Naved and Dr Gunjan Sharma. Professor Praveen Singh nudged the process consistently with infectious enthusiasm. His admirable ability to familiarize us with the often complex relationships of structure and process, his clarity and focus of the relevance of practices to the mission of AUD, reflected an almost missionary zeal. He ensured that our compass stayed with Framing Futures, opening new vistas to embellish the idea and imagination of AUD and the need to push the envelope on change and meaningful growth.

Our deepest gratitude to Manasi Thapliyal Navani, who served as pathfinder and muse, guiding us gently but surely, through the many labyrinth pathways and layers – intellectual, social and cultural – of the AUD imagination and transmitting through her deep commitment and passion to the University, the excitement of the unfolding of a world waiting to find articulation in the undergraduate space. Her diligence, attention to detail and her ability to link the micro with the macro, along with her meticulous drafting of proceedings, enabled the committee to have "new eyes". To her must go the credit of breathing life into the "possibilities" that emerge in the text of this Report.

Our team of Dr Vijay Tankha, Professor Maina Chawla Singh, Professor Vanita Shastri and myself are grateful to the Decennial Review Committee, particularly, Professor N. Jayaram (Chairperson, DRC), Professor Chiranjeeb Sen, Professor Pankaj Chandra and Professor

Chandan Mukherjee, for sharing with such generosity, their wisdom, sagacity and profoundly insightful perspectives. We would also like to acknowledge critical insights provided by the members of the University's Mid-Term Review Committee and founding leadership of the University during their interaction with the Committee.

Finally, the process of interacting with this unique community of learners has made us alive to the potentiality of AUD as a space that can innovatively re-craft UG education for the whole country - melding access and excellence and by making despair unconvincing and hope practical.

Date: 13 July 2018   **Meenakshi Gopinath**
Chairperson

Chapter 1

Evolution of the Undergraduate Programme at AUD

The Vision for Undergraduate Studies at AUD

AUD envisioned the undergraduate programmes as critical to shaping the University's ethos. The concept note for the UG programmes (2009) states:

> Undergraduate programmes…shape the institution. They determine the students it attracts, and the outside world judges it by the quality of the graduates it produces….Undergraduate programmes have to be designed to meet the needs, demands and aspirations of students as also to provide them challenging intellectual stimulation and help them develope analytical and logical skills.

The AUD undergraduate programme was the result of extensive consultations on the core philosophy, the macro-structure and design of the university curriculum. The governing principle was a shift from the conventional didactic and transmission-based approach to a more experiential transformative learning experience. The emphasis has been on promoting learners' self-engagement, peer learning, learning to learn, and field experience. The classroom contact hours were limited to 16 hours a week along with a provision of tutorial support to make learning a concern-based and dialogic process. AUD consciously decided to side-step the University of Delhi's nomenclature of "pass and honours" with a conviction that UG programmes should not be differentiated to operate in a hierarchy. Instead, an alternative trajectory was created so that students could choose to acquire a degree either by pursuing a three-year programme with a single major or continue through a fourth year (majoring in another stream of specialization). The core features of the UG programme are as follows:

1. A Unique Curriculum Model and Pedagogical Design: AUD's undergraduate programmes were planned to be not just syllabi-centred, but aimed at, as the National Knowledge Commission noted, "…generating alternative ways of Being and Seeing to fill an important gap in the continuum of knowledge and skills". Curriculum planning was centered on student's needs and aspirations and the scope for innovation was built into the curriculum planning process. AUD adopted a choice-based credit system[1] that allowed for mobility between disciplines as well as lateral mobility between institutions. It may be noted that in AUD's early history, the **four-year dual major programme** was instituted and functioned successfully. The four-year dual major programme was a unique initiative which did not exist elsewhere. The dual-major structure enabled students to engage meaningfully with two disciplines over a period of four years[2].

The programme structure was envisioned (with an eclectic view of the graduate attributes) to provide a meaningful liberal arts education aimed at acquainting students with multiple methods of enquiry and approaches to knowledge. The structure included Foundation Courses[3] and Special Interest Courses to help realise this vision in practice. The **Foundation Courses (FCs),** expected to occupy

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[1] All courses at the UG level are of 4 credits; semester credit load is of 16 credits; a total of 96 credits are required for programme completion. Majoring in a discipline requires a student to take 12 courses(12X4=48 credits).

The remaining 48 credits need to be accumulated through Foundation Courses (16 credits) and other electives (up to 32 credits).

[2] Students, who exercised this choice, opted to follow the conventional combination of disciplines, like Mathematics and Economics; but also did for instance, Psychology and Mathematics/Economics.

[3] To begin with, FCs such as, Introduction to Social Sciences, Logic and Reasoning, and English for Academic Purposeswere compulsory. An optional foundational course had to be chosen from a basket of foundation electives (Annexure B). In addition, the programme of study encompassed a combination of courses designed to promote the acquisition of certain skills that students can bring to bear in a variety of learning and career/professional situations.

around 20 percent of the credit share of the programme, were meant to enable perspective building and for enhancing basic study skills. The **Special Interest Courses** were offered by different schools which were not necessarily fully-involved in the UG programmes. These courses provided training and skills in selected applied and career oriented fields, such as Digital Story Telling, Computer Applications in Project Management, Legal Literacy, Understanding Disability, Digital Photography, Editing and Publishing, and Art Appreciation among others. These are now no longer a separate category and are subsumed under Electives (see Annexure C).

The **pedagogical design** was aimed at teaching students to think critically and creatively, to conceptualize and solve problems, to analyse, reason and arrive at evidence-based conclusions. Expecting teachers to meaningfully engage with students required the University to ensure an enabling environment for teachers. This commitment translated into the policy of cohort size not to exceed 35 students[4]. The initial programme structure also provided a choice to defer the choice of Major till the second year. However, in 2014, the pressure to conform to the conventional template compelled AUD to begin the teaching of the Major discipline from semester one itself. **Experiential learning** was envisaged as a core pillar of learning. Field engagement was meant to incorporate credited internship / Summer-School / field-attachment with professional organisations / schools / government bodies / NGOs / commercial establishments. This is a domain which has seen few initiatives at the undergraduate level so far. While the integration of community-based practice and field-based exposure is yet to take shape[5], this domain has a significant potential for further enriching the undergraduate space.

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[4]Subsequently, with greater concentration of students in Foundation Courses and Electives, an upper limit of 50 students has been adopted.

[5]AUD has anMoU with PRADAN for the MPhil Programme in Development Practice whose central tenet is field-based immersion. The undergraduate space could leverage such MoUs to create opportunities for UG students' exposure to diverse field sites.

2. *Faculty:* SUS does not have a dedicated faculty for teaching undergraduate programmes. Instead, any faculty appointed in AUD is automatically and concurrently part of SUS, and is expected to contribute to course-design, teaching and assessment of undergraduate programmes. This structure was aimed to ensure faculty participation across the University and to leverage their expertise in undergraduate teaching. This was also an attempt to break the hierarchy between undergraduate and postgraduate teaching prevalent at most Indian universities. This innovation was meant to ensure the realisation of the mandate of excellence in teaching and effective pedagogic practices (such as use of ICT, international collaborations, field interface etc.).

3. *Admission Process and Students:* To start with, there was a clear agreement on selecting students through an engaging and meaningful admission process so as to develop a sense of belonging and association not only among selected students but also to ensure that those unable to get through the initial screening process, were not left feeling disempowered. However, the logistical constraints impeded the realization of this vision of the admission process. AUD has, however, institutionalized various student-support mechanisms, through provision of scholarships and fee-waivers, language support, and a needs-blind admission policy.

4. *Assessment:* A comprehensive assessment system was emphasized rather than routine summative assessment. So, AUD adopted a system of continuous assessment through term-papers, independent study, community-based projects, tutorials, group tasks, book reviews, presentations, theatre, etc.

5. *Governance of the Undergraduate Programmes:* Given the conventional undergraduate programmes at affiliating universities which often reflect a disjunction between curriculum planning and its transaction, AUD felt a need for offering an integrated, comprehensive and seamless undergraduate programme of study located within a

School of Undergraduate Studies. This unique model was supported by an innovative governance structure in the form of an Academic and Administrative Coordination Committee headed by a Dean and a team of programme coordinators. The structure where SUS houses the students but has no dedicated faculty has also created several challenges and remained an Achilles Heel, a weak link in AUD's academic promise.

Review of Undergraduate Programmes of Study (2010-17)

The Mid-Term Review (MTR)

- *Governance and faculty deployment:* MTR recommended AUD to begin the process of creation of a coherent structure with distributed responsibilities of academic administration within the SUS. Consequently, position of Deputy Dean was created in response. MTR had found the existing informal practice of appointing coordinators for each programme as untenable. Instead, it recommended the appointment of Directors for each SUS Programme as convenors of their respective subject groups. To facilitate the process of creating the core faculty, MTR recommended formation of Subject Groups from the whole faculty with the Directors of SUS Programme as Chairpersons. The formation of subject groups has been attempted in Sociology and Economics. It is still too early to assess the extent to which these arrangements have been effective in breaking the tendency of restricting undergraduate teaching to a few schools. The MTR Committee also recommended the introduction of a teaching norm for all faculty members to teach undergraduate courses.

- *Catchment and Student Orientation:* MTR recommended organising and advertising summer events, like a Basic English Proficiency Course for students graduating from class XII to broaden the catchment area of students. It also recommended strengthening the *Language support* mechanism.

Recommendations also supported differentiating the levels of English proficiency courses; and creation of a dedicated formal structure mandated to initiate an English Language Learning Support Programme.

- *Mentorship:* MTR recommended that AUD should work concertedly to strengthen its *mentorship programme.* It recommended a scheme wherein a mentorship cohort could comprise students from different years of the academic programmes, attached to a Faculty advisor. The objectives would include improving academic performance and supporting students to integrate within the social space of the University. **This recommendation has not yet wholly translated into practice.**

- *Curriculum:* MTR recommended that each course team should develop reading anthologies for their respective courses, which could be **updated every academic year, as per feedback from students.** Student evaluation of courses was also recommended. It advised the University to pursue an internal review of the relevance, content and level of the undergraduate curricula and the review of the curriculum, pedagogy, and evaluation procedures for different FCs. Subsequently, a committee consisting of teachers associated with the FCs carried out a review of the FCs and suggested changes in the organisation of FCs.

- *Life outside classrooms:* The MTR committee observed that this aspect required urgent attention even if the existing deficit in infrastructure was not within the control of AUD. The Committee felt that a better utilisation of existing infrastructure and greater effort on the part of the University was required to nurture this space.

NAAC SUS Self-Study Report

While the NAAC peer review team did not have any specific observation about the Undergraduate Programmes of AUD, the Self-Study Report identified certain gaps. It stated that although different courses

encouraged **independent study projects** as part of their assessment, there was no space for student projects within the programme structure. According to the University policy 25% of the fees collected are set aside as a Learning Enhancement Fund (Fund for LE) for the academic enrichment of the students, including field visits, and extra mural activities associated with any programme. The UG NAAC Self-Study Report noted that the SUS students are to use these resources for their enrichment. These funds (to which the UG students contribute a significant share) have not been proportionately utilized for undergraduate students (see fig. 2.6)[6]. This highlights the **lack of proactive "bidding" for grants by the SUS.** The responsibility for application for funds towards UG programmes need to be clearly delineated within each programme and vested in a functionary within SUS.

The SSR further noted that although all UG programmes start with common Foundation Courses (FCs) which offer an interdisciplinary approach to social sciences, currently they do not seem to be fulfilling this credo. Two of the courses are for language proficiency (in Hindi and English), and one is on Environmental Issues. This leaves only one course from the FC basket which was considered inadequate introduction to the field of social sciences from an interdisciplinary perspective. As for flexibility for the students to change the area of their major within the first two years, this has proved to be impractical owing to the absence of an active Academic Advising Unit. Students and Faculty also confirmed that three other strengths identified in the SSR have also been either diluted or discontinued over the years:

- Tutorial component whereby readings and other academic issues are discussed in smaller groups.

- Provision of individual mentoring of students.

- Continuous assessment and feedback on performance throughout the semester to help students keep track of their academic performance.

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[6]The UG students seem to be subsidizing the senior students for various kinds of costs of learning at AUD.

Some of the challenges identified in the SSR were:

- reaching out to students from underprivileged backgrounds.

- bridging the gap between the English language proficiency of students from underprivileged backgrounds and the level at which the courses are delivered, especially since the medium of instruction is English.

The SSR also noted the unique opportunity for strengthening Liberal Arts Education and offering a robust **interdisciplinary undergraduate education,** not offered elsewhere in the city[7].

SUS Internal Review Committee

The SUS Internal Review Committee felt that first year undergraduate students should get a glimpse of their chosen programme, in order to build a sense of cohort, and become familiar with programme faculty at the outset, rather than in the second semester, as was the case till 2014. To this end, it proposed that disciplinary core courses should commence in the first semester itself. The Committee's recommendations essentially articulated for the schools across AUD to increase their contribution to SUS through 1) developing and offering electives in their particular fields; 2) offering Foundation Optional courses; and 3) sharing disciplinary teaching[8].

UGC-CBCS

While AUD adopted a choice-based-credit framework from its inception, the UGC mandate to adopt its curriculum and credit framework with a maximum deviation of 20-30 percent, has created differences and

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[7]The UGRC, however, observed during the tenure of the current review process, contention and debate over the issue of desirability of interdisciplinary undergraduate education.

[8]The experience of shared courses has not proved entirely salutary for UG students.

confusion regarding the existing philosophy of AUD credit system. The UGC framework militates against the spirit of "learner-centred" education. This is because the mandated credit hours discount for any learning outside the 'didactic' classroom space. The stipulation also inhibits any innovative articulation of curriculum or pedagogy. AUD will need to creatively interpret this external mandate and reformulate practices accordingly. Synchronization between the UGC credit requirements and the CBCS offered at AUD could be brought about by provision of two active tutorials within each course and the tutorials can be formatted creatively between self-study, field or research components, depending upon the capacity and inclination of the student.

It appears that at the core of these challenges at AUD is the current organizational structure of SUS, and the mechanism for assigning faculty for UG teaching. The organization of teaching-learning within the UG space often appears as a mosaic of incoherent interrelationships and responsibilities, which seem to dilute the original vision and promise of the UG programme—as an innovative template of multidisciplinary learning and a unique context for continuous exploration of emerging contours of learning. It appears that processes that represent somewhat unstructured "quilting" or "quilling" do little to enrich the tapestry of learning. These challenges are highlighted in the next two chapters.

Chapter 2

# The Student Interface

2.1. Introduction

Sa Vidya Ya Vimuktaye is an oft invoked Sanskrit aphorism that means 'that alone is knowledge that leads to liberation'. AUD stands at a vantage position in its evolution to lend substance to this aspiration of transforming consciousness of newer generation of learners, who will engage with the world, equipped with the knowledge and skills to impact and transform it to a more humane, inclusive and democratic, empowering space. SUS was conceived as an innovative school whose academic practices were to be inventive and rigorous with focus on interdisciplinary possibilities, social justice and engaged scholarship. AUD's vision of undergraduate education was in sync with students' needs and aspirations and the programmes aimed at creating students who are engaged citizens, employable, and prepared for advanced academic training. Thus, the undergraduate space shared the mission of AUD in following a liberal, open, student-friendly policy of pedagogy and assessment, participatory teaching, need-based mentorship and a commitment to continuous, progressive evaluation of academic practices. This vision of undergraduate education informed the Committee's engagement during the review process. UGRC interacted with student representatives from the current cohort as well as the alumni and reflected on the processes and structures guided by students' voices and perspective. This Chapter documents and presents issues, challenges and observations around the student interface emergent from the review process.

2.2. Student Profile

AUD has witnessed a steep increase in the demand for its undergraduate programmes. From a total of 1204 applicants for the 252 seats in 2012 the number of applicants has risen to 7300 for the 452 seats[9] in 2017-18; an increase of over 30 percent.

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[9]These figures do not include supernumerary seats and Vocational Studies seats (95 for the three streams).

Figure 2.1: Number of Applications to Sanctioned Seats for Undergraduate Programmes at AUD
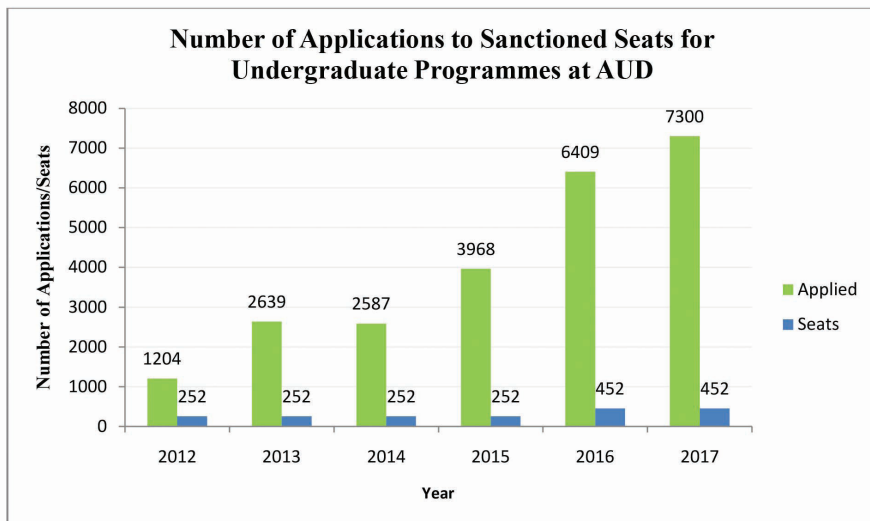
Admission to the UG programmes takes place through a screening process based on class XII aggregate score cut-off. The number of undergraduate students at AUD has increased from 68 in 2010-11 to 1162 in 2017-18. This also includes the undergraduates in liberal and vocational streams at the Karampura campus.

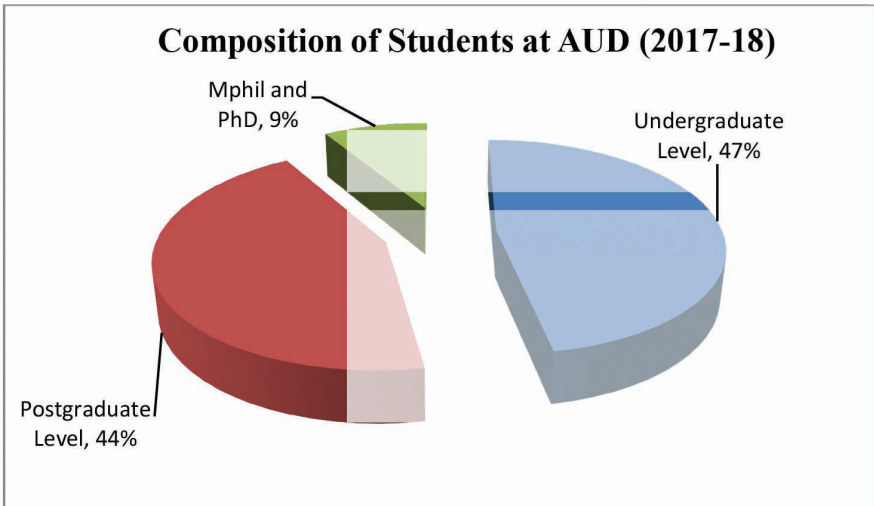Figure 2.2: Number of Undergraduate Students at AUD
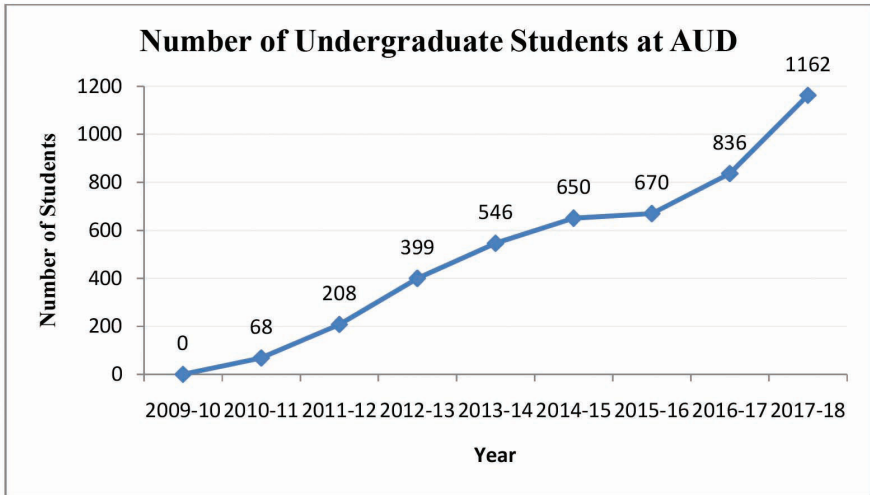
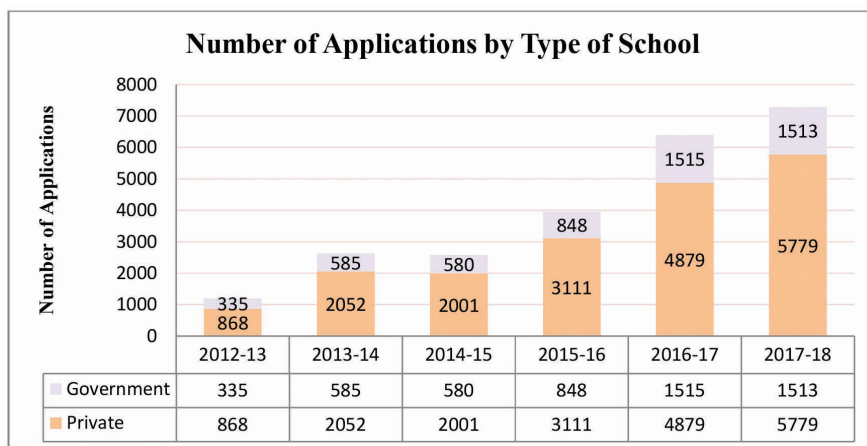On the whole, the undergraduate students comprise almost half the students at AUD.

Figure 2.3: Composition of Students at AUD

The heterogeneity and diversity in student profile has been a recurring concern among faculty members at AUD. Over the years, the catchment area has shifted towards private schools as opposed to the government

school system. In 2012-13, 28 percent of applications were from students graduating from government schools. In 2017-18 it has dropped to 20 percent (See Figure 2.4). Among those admitted, a larger proportion of students admitted on the reserved seats for the Scheduled Castes have studied in government schools, as opposed to students admitted on the unreserved seats. In 2017, for instance, almost 87 percent of students who were admitted on the unreserved seats had studied at private schools and close to 60 percent of the students admitted in the SC category had studied in government schools; nearly 70 percent of the students admitted in the OBC category had studied in private schools. This heterogeneity and diversity can be a potential strength as it offers an opportunity for pedagogical explorations working towards creating a truly inclusive space of learning at AUD. Without adequate planning for provision of student support services it can become a formidable challenge.

Figure 2.4: Number of Applications by Type of School for Undergraduate Programmes at AUD

Number of Applications by Type of School

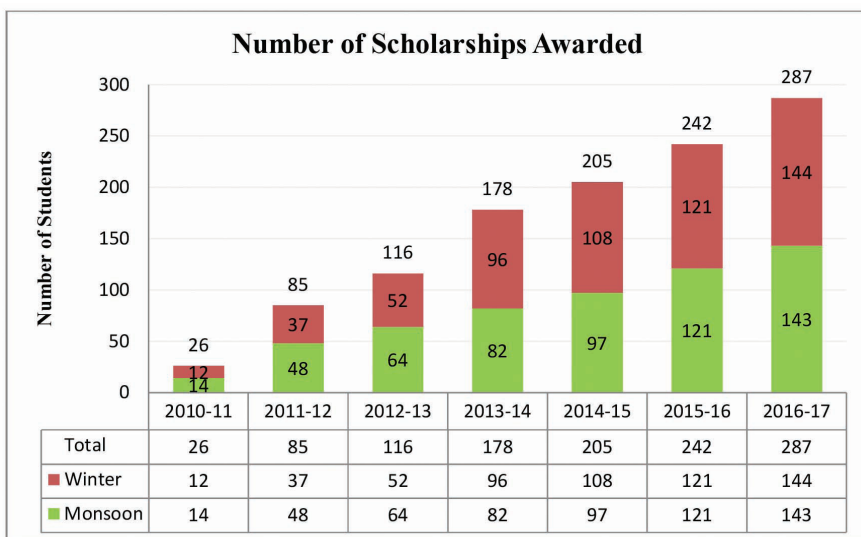|	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Government	335	585	580	848	1515	1513
Private	868	2052	2001	3111	4879	5779

In keeping with other nation-wide trends in higher education the participation of women in higher education has increased at AUD as well. **The percentage of women students admitted to AUD's UG programme was 59% in 2017.** On an average the percentage of

women students admitted to AUD's UG programme has been close to **53% over the last six years.** This reflects the aspiration among young women for good quality liberal arts education in the city.

2.3. Student Support

AUD has a differential credit-based fee structure and fees are charged per credit. In 2017-18, fee was charged at the rate of INR 1160 per credit for the BA Honours programmes and INR 500 for the B.Voc. programme. Over three years, therefore, a BA student has to pay around INR 1,11, 360 for the 96 credits requirement for the UG degree. Apart from offering full to partial fee waivers to students, AUD has made an effort to rationalise its fee structure by creating a corpus for scholarships and a Learning Enhancement Fund (Fund for LE) out of the funds collected through fees.

Figure 2.5: Number of Scholarships Awarded to UG Students at AUD

	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Total	26	85	116	178	205	242	287
Winter	12	37	52	96	108	121	144
Monsoon	14	48	64	82	97	121	143

Fee waivers

Full fee waivers exist for SC, ST and disabled students. In 2017-18 for instance, 59 full fee waivers were awarded, and 7 were awarded partial

fee waivers to general category students based on their economic need; 72 OBC students were awarded full fee waivers, and 20 were awarded partial fee waivers; all the 159 SC students admitted were awarded full fee waiver; all the 53 ST students admitted were awarded full fee waiver. In all, of the 1068 students enrolled in 2017-18 in the BA programmes across Kashmere Gate and Karampura campuses, **345 students were granted full fee waiver, and 27 received partial fee waivers. If one includes the Vocational Studies students in this figure, 403 fee waivers were granted.**

*Fund for Learning Enhancement and Student Welfare Fund*

25% of the fee collected is earmarked as a Fund for Learning Enhancement (Fund for LE). Activities supported through this Fund are meant to enhance student-learning. Students are encouraged to take up these activities individually or in groups under faculty supervision. The types of activities covered under Fund for LE may include:

- Field studies (local & outstation)
- Internships
- Dissertations
- Workshops/staging of events/demos/displays/exhibitions
- Supplementing teaching resources by inviting experts-in-residence, guest/adjunct/visiting faculty and teaching assistants

So far, the UG programmes have been using only a small portion of the LE fund available for them. In fact, the SUS LE funds are cross-subsidizing postgraduate students' learning in other Schools. Over the years, approximately 91 percent of the LE Funds available for undergraduate studies have remained unutilized[10]. Administrative delays in disbursements from SWF were also cited by UG students as detrimental for those in need of financial support.

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[10]UG students also felt that their access to field-based studies and events through the Fund for LE as well as the Student Welfare Fund was restricted on account of complicated bureaucratic procedures.

Figure 2.6: Utilisation of Learning Enhancement Fund by SUS
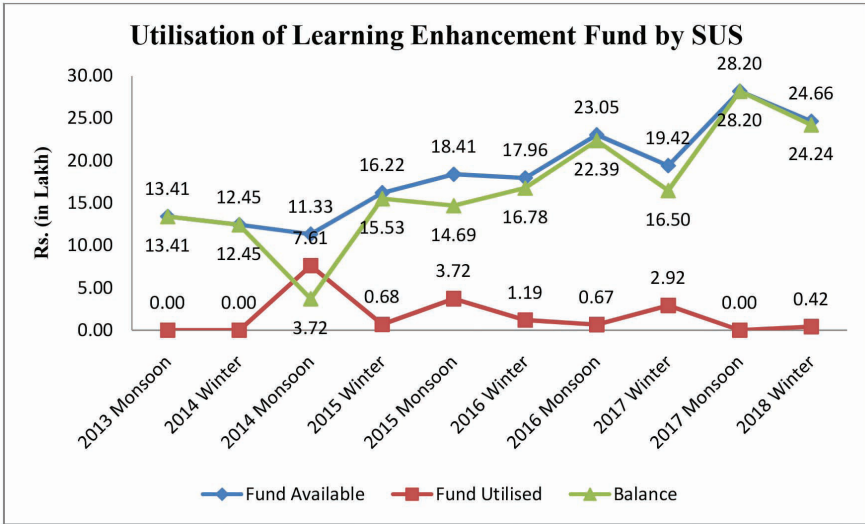
2.4. Reflections from the University Alumni

Several graduates interacted with the Review Committees and reflected on their undergraduate experience at AUD. While most graduates from the UG programmes shared their excitement of experiencing AUD as a liberal space, some had critical observations, especially some BA graduates who felt that their UG degree needed to prepare them better to fulfill their professional aspirations. They emphasized the need for a more well-rounded curriculum, active academic mentorship and advising, and the institution of a Career Development Centre.

> *We needed to get soft-skills which would have helped us going forward into other MA programmes or jobs.[11]*

Graduates expressed that the opportunities for field visits, practicum, internships and skill-enhancement workshops need to be expanded. The skill-sets perceived to be essential for the graduates as shared by the Alumni were:

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[11]An Economics graduate, at the Meeting with the University Alumni organised on 18 February 2018 at the AUD Kashmere Gate campus.

- Writing CV and communication skills which are useful in applying for a job;

- Mastery of use of basic computer software like the Microsoft Excel, Google sheet etc.;

- Basic research skills, and enhanced domain knowledge.

Some students spoke candidly about specific difficulties of the undergraduate programme. Several Alumni expressed dissatisfaction with the nature of foundation courses and in the sequencing of courses within the discipline majors. A graduate from the English literature programme expressed her disappointment in not being able to choose electives from other programmes, attributing the same to the rigidity in approach of the programme team:

> *I love being able to flit between courses across programmes But my faculty was resistant….I felt a sense of helplessness in facing up to the inflexibility that I confronted.[12]*

During the discussions, it also emerged that since the English Faculty does not prescribe any 'core' courses and all courses are more or less at par, this created confusion amongst students about the **levels of the courses** as well as a sense of helplessness in **assembling a coherent programme by themselves.**

Some graduates expressed their scepticism about the utility of the feedback forms to share their grievances about course transaction or programmatic choices. Graduates also felt that "the transition from School to College was relatively easy...but...College and beyond was hard".

One of the graduates noted the following about the nature of assessment in his undergraduate programme:

[12]English Graduate, at the Meeting with the University Alumni organised on 18 February 2018 at the AUD Kashmere Gate campus.

"My CV was only about academics….We had not learnt much creativity or critical thinking through our essay-based assignments..."[13]

They highlighted the need for integrating the following into the curriculum:

- Creative ways of framing assignments; assessment situations with clear objectives.
- Setting the bar higher for undergraduate academic practices at AUD
- Integrating opportunities for building a work-profile into the curriculum;
- Career-counseling; research skills workshops (to be introduced through the Foundation Courses).
- Greater institutional support to acquire soft-skills and improvement in English language proficiency

Overall, the comments revealed that the students' experiences varied across programmes owing to different levels of faculty engagement. Students expressed a strong desire for sustained mentoring by faculty to prepare them for the transition from the university to the workplace.

2.5. Reflections from the Undergraduate Students at AUD:Observations and Issues

The Review Committee met with a cross-section of AUD undergraduates to understand their academic and extra-curricular experiences. Students shared their observations on multiple aspects of their university experience including curricular issues, university services and infrastructural issues. Students expressed their overall satisfaction with AUD, some admitting that they often inadvertently compare AUD with the University of Delhi but in doing so, realize that the courses offered to them at AUD are more interesting and innovative. Broadly,

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[13]Sociology Graduate, at the Meeting with the University Alumni organised on 18 February 2018 at the AUD Kashmere Gate campus

they appreciated the liberal character of the University and found the administration and faculty members, in general, to be supportive and accommodating.

Reflections from the students also pointed to a sense of marginalization within the University space at multiple levels. They report inadequate spaces for creative activity. The timetable reflects academic requirements, the scheduling aspects, and student expectations are often at variance. It appears that the library and other spaces in the University are not conducive to the needs of the UG students. While PG students still had dedicated classrooms, the undergraduate students had the corridors. UG students also feel that negotiation over space/ structure and the timetable have not focused enough on their need or convenience. They also shared other challenges and issues of concern in the following areas:

a. The BA (H) option in the Social Science & Humanities (SSH) (a sort of tripos at AUD) presents unique and complex problems. Students found the structure and interface of online admissions application confusing. The advertised programme information was either not updated or misleading. For example, the SSH programme mentions Political Science as a trajectory, which some students can interpret as a possibility of majoring in Political Science at AUD, which is not the case at present. Students of BA (H) in Social Science & Humanities (SSH) shared issues arising from the all-elective nature of their programme. Students of this stream felt "orphaned" since their convenience and priorities and choices were seldom taken into consideration while scheduling and room allocation planning. All the three cohorts present during the interaction with the Committee noted their confusion regarding course registration processes and programme requirements. Students felt that the SSH programme lacks a coherent and clear structure and leads to some confusion. Students noted that even the faculty members had different understandings of the requirements. Currently, SSH students do not have an assigned class room. A common space is required for SSH students to come together and meet.

b. An important concern was that very few graduates of AUD, if at all, **qualify the entrance examination for AUD's postgraduate programmes.** This is problematic for a University whose stated mission is to promote access and mobility, especially for its own students. It also brings into question the overall standard and quality of undergraduate education at AUD. It also foregrounds the need for more in-depth coordination between the UG and PG space.

c. While the students were generally appreciative of the foundation level language course, *English for Academic Purposes* (EAP), some felt that the language courses demand too much of their time, which could otherwise be devoted to their programme courses or other perspective building courses. They also suggested that the nature of assignments in EAP be made more flexible.

d. It was shared that the English language competency issue among the students is causing unfair disparity in their performance evaluation. One student mentioned that about 14 students in an Economics course have failed the first assessment and this is most probably due to lack of proficiency in the English language.

e. Students were curious about the initially posited dual Major option. They enquired about the fourth year and how it could be beneficial and how they could opt for it. They also expressed the need for clarity on how to audit a course, since these were advertised as among the innovative options available at AUD.

f. Students suggested the need for:

- Some compulsory perspective building courses.
- Academic advisor to guide students' course selection.
- The introduction of a dissertation component to support research skills.
- Greater field exposures, and immersions and workshops for several kinds of competency building to prepare for professional life.

g. Students felt that there was a difference in the nature of involvement between the permanent and adjunct faculty members[14]. They felt that the level of teaching, experience and commitment of the full-time faculty was far greater than the teachers who came in for just a semester.

h. Students perceived the undergraduate studies at the Kashmere Gate campus as 'qualitatively' better than at the Karampura campus. Some of the reasons they cited for this perception were about the availability of a more diverse set of electives/course choices at the Kashmere Gate campus, as well as access to more events/seminars being organised across Schools.

i. Students felt that although the course feedback is collected regularly, it is neither utilized adequately, nor discussed with the students. They reported that the course grades were not updated regularly on ERP and qualitative feedback explaining the grade was not easily available.

j. Students expressed concern about the lack of an active co-curricular space at AUD, particularly for the undergraduates. A survey conducted among the undergraduate students shows that a majority of the time, they are either inside classrooms or spend time in corridors.

k. Time tabling and allocation of classrooms was also a significant concern inhibiting an active and fulfilling student life. For instance, one of the elective courses was over subscribed with 90 students and conducted as a single batch. Students consequently had to sit in cramped classrooms. They suggested that there either be a cap on enrollments or a large class be split into sections in keeping with AUD's own norms.

l. It appears that undergraduate students are not able to benefit from AUD's international partnership opportunities. The possibility for student exchange programmes and semesters abroad remain unutilized for the undergraduate space.

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[14]As shared by a sixth semester BA (H) Economics student.

2.6. Recommendations

In envisioning a vibrant UG space in the context of a knowledge society in the 21st century, some imperatives speak loudly across contexts:

1. Academic excellence and critical intellectual inquiry

2. Tackling novel and often ill-defined problems

3. Personal and professional ethics

4. Intercultural understanding and global citizenship

5. Communication and collaboration

6. Leadership and advocacy for the improvement of the human condition (social responsibility)

7. The ability to make informed choices

AUD's undergraduate programmes could reflect on, and review the extent to which these imperatives have been integrated into their design. At a time when the social sciences have begun to take a back seat in the imagination of universities, the potential that AUD presents to forge new mindsets that can create a new style of social science pedagogy is immense. This calls for transcending dualisms created by the "scientism" that now seems all pervasive and a recognition that, as Shiv Vishvanathan (eminent philosopher-social-scientist) says, "…the laboratory alone is no longer the centre of the universe of innovation. The city can also become an innovative site touched by the heat and dust of subaltern aspirations and inventiveness that can interrogate the conventional iconography and hierarchization of knowledge systems". It is, as Vishwanathan says, in the search for cognitive justice as a fraternal act that the future of the university lies. Local knowledges, tribal knowledges, gendered knowledges, civilizational knowledges, dying knowledges, all need a site, a theatre of encounter which is not patronizing, not preservationist, not fundamentalist, but open and playful; it is this that is in the life blood of the future university. This Committee feels that such an emphasis could be enhanced and strengthened across the courses offered in AUD's undergraduate programmes.

Enriching the UG Experience:

Academic Advising needs to be strengthened to guide and help structure the progression trajectory of students with the apposite combination of courses. With around 60 or so electives (from the different schools that 'service' the UG Programme) and about 17 Foundation Courses (Annexure B) (of which three are compulsory and the optional FC has to be chosen out of the remaining /or from among those on offer), the freshman batch confronts a smorgasbord of often 'undecipherable' choices. This cafeteria approach can work optimally in the AUD context only if supported by active **Academic Advising and Mentoring at every stage of the students' progression.** A more rigorous template for Mentoring and Advising is eminently desirable.

Courses need to be coded and communicated to reflect ascending levels of difficulty, so that student choices in successive semester reflect a **scaling up** from the previous semester. Treating courses at approximately similar levels of difficulty may prove detrimental to progressive learning and intellectual growth. Academic Advising would also help students to structure their programme while being mindful of their individual competency levels and potential for a specific discipline.

Orientation Programme and Capstone Courses: The Committee notes that the structure of the first year **orientation programme** needs careful review and extensive planning to make it meaningful. Students' experience of accessing various resources, like the library for instance, point to serious gaps in the orientation process, which is a crucial passage from school to university. Instead of offering an orientation in one big batch, hands-on workshops with different and smaller batches, for every combination at UG level, would prove more useful. This could include hands-on training on accessing library resources and/or 1 or 2 credit hands-on basic and advanced study skills courses offered across the first two semesters for all UG students.

AUD could consider offering formal workshops or **capstone courses for the undergraduate students to strengthen research and study**

skills as well as IT competencies. Modules may be designed to strengthen English language and academic writing support beyond the credited-taught courses.

Student Feedback: While the provision of the Student Faculty Committee (SFC) makes it easier for students to share and discuss their issues, it appears that the SFC meetings are not convened on a regular basis. Currently, feedback fora/mechanisms do not adequately help in ensuring accountability from teachers and students. **The SFC needs to be reimagined in the SUS context for more responsive mechanisms for addressing students' needs and grievances.**

Field-based Practice: AUD must actively explore the possibility of integrating meaningful practicum or field-based engagement across courses or even as a stand-alone component of the UG programme structure. Several critical issues need to be addressed in designing such practicum/field exposure. The undergraduates may be under-equipped to participate in processes in the field other than as untrained observers, especially if the interaction is occasional and intermittent. Practical training requires a longer gestation period and the very young may often have little experience of their own to bring to the table. This does not mean that all instruction must occur within the classroom. The aim of field visits and practicum should be clear to start with, even if rather different outcomes are achieved. Here student feedback and observation will be an important input. Some senior students could accompany and co-ordinate some of these field trips as well, generating not only interdisciplinary but also institutional cohesiveness.

Language Proficiency: For students who come from a Hindi-medium background, or whose academic English needs attention (a common condition), there is no solution except for making resources available to improve written and spoken language skills. These skills could be scaled up and also made available to other institutions in Delhi, particularly the government schools in the National Capital Territory, which are now trying to improve their own English teaching. Creating new digital

programmes for rapid English self-study is something that is going on across the board, and AUD could be among the progressive institutions shaping the pedagogic discourse and practice in this regard.

Critical thinking courses: While it has currently become fashionable to have such courses, these are ultimately based on good old logic courses, which have been ramped up and expanded to include not merely formal but also informal logic: such courses could be short-term modules (taught over weekends for instance) which would give students a handle on how to deal with language in general and academic discourse in particular. Such a course could be outsourced to guest faculty and taught at all campuses. They have proved useful also for building self-confidence in communications (as the students of the B.Voc. programme shared about the positive gains of the General Education courses). Similarly, the teaching of soft-skills could be part of weekend/evening activities including non-competitive, non-professional sports, where space is available.

The UG programme should be designed to open the minds of students rather than to fill them with specific facts. If interdisciplinarity is to become a hall mark of the UG courses, the curriculum as well as the pedagogy should be able to engage students in a variety of perspectives, thus encouraging them to think creatively themselves. A course on **Food and Nutrition,** for instance, would be enriched by components of the history and politics of grain as well as the economics of famine. While core courses are meant to be academically grounded in the self-understanding of the discipline, the elective courses have greater room for 'fun' and creative openness[15]. The interface between the major and minor courses may be reviewed as AUD undertakes evaluation of UG programmes.

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[15]To find the right balance in building a uniform level of core competency in Foundation Courses across campuses and yet providing diversity in the specialisations of each campus, in the discipline and elective courses would be worth collaborative engagement. If law is treated as a binding/core theme, it could incorporate literature, history and philosophy of law (with inputs from Islamic, Chinese and Jewish Greek Roman and Indian traditions). The future of such a programme might be conceived by holding an interdisciplinary seminar around the idea of law as such.

AUD as a brand: AUD must better brand and advertise itself as a progressive space for inclusive growth that caters to the aspirations of young students from the NCR, especially those that are left out in the race to meet the unrealistic cut offs for admission in Delhi's Central Universities and colleges on account of arbitrary marking practices across different states of the Indian Union. There is likely to be a large number of young aspirants who feel disempowered by conventional practices of gauging merit. This is the primary "catchment" area for AUD, and of this, a large cohort exists in both public and private schools in the NCR. AUD **was set up primarily to cater to this population and needs to redouble efforts to optimize its message of possibilities and opportunities for creative learning.**

The Committee also feels that AUD has not proactively 'transmitted' the idea of innovative UG programmes to the larger public. Conventional admission processes need not overshadow an unconventional innovative space. AUD may explore alternate admission practices for its UG programmes in a manner that revisits the idea of merit (as elaborated in Chapter 5).

International Exchange: An active office of International Programmes for student exchange, faculty research collaborations and short-term courses on Delhi for foreign students would greatly enhance the AUD profile. This will facilitate an international footprint for AUD and enhance its image as a unique space that gives shape to practices of inclusion and a cosmopolitanism transcending borders and boundaries. It will also go a long way in opening up new vistas of learning for UG students.

Conventions and Traditions: The ability to infuse and mould both symbol and substance into its activities and events and indeed the everyday rhythms of university life is closely tied to the possible impact that AUD makes in forging a sense of community, identification and ownership of the space among its undergraduate population. While some universities achieve it through annual cultural and academic festivals, others accomplish it by publicized collaborations on popular

civic and outreach activity. AUD has a unique advantage to use the multifarious resources and opportunities of the capital city, to build partnerships around credible civic initiatives on the environment, public health, restoration and preservation activities of INTACH, hosting SPICMACAY events, gender melas and so on. These often reinforce and build a network of relationships that nurture identification with the University to build consensus on what it stands for. As Pankaj Chandra has evocatively said:

> Institutions collectively celebrate certain values, events, achievements and people…orientations, convocations, award dinners, etc., were traditions that built a sense of pride in the community. Unfortunately, these traditions have been lost in many institutions and soft processes never took root in most. Perhaps the most important tool at the disposal of the university to move towards excellence was lost"[16]

It is important for AUD to invest in forging healthy and meaningful traditions at this stage so that collaborative practices can be forged and sustained through collective iterative praxis. Nurturing the UG students' bond with AUD would require this creative institutional intervention.

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[16]Pankaj Chandra, "Governance in Higher Education", in Devesh Kapur and Pratap Bhanu Mehta ed. *Navigating the Labyrinth,* p. 249.

Chapter 3

The Faculty Interface

3.1. Introduction

AUD has a core of regular faculty with a teacher-student ratio of nearly 1:15[17] (with class room cohort size of 35-40 on an average). It is envisaged that the regular faculty take care of the entire core component of the academic programmes and as many elective courses as possible. In addition, there are Adjunct, Visiting and Guest faculty. Adjunct faculty are contracted by the University to offer an elective course, ordinarily for a minimum period of three years, so that the course she offers is part of the standard pool of courses on offer at AUD. Visiting faculty may either be from Delhi, other parts of India or overseas, who because of their established eminence or expertise are invited to be part of the faculty for varying time periods ranging from a few days to over a semester. Guest faculty are invited to give one or more lectures or seminars within a programme. This profile has been conceptualized keeping in view the interdisciplinary nature of AUD's academic programmes, and also leveraging the advantage of AUD being located in Delhi where there is possibility of drawing expert resource from various sectors. The architecture of AUD's academic programmes ordinarily comprises a core component with a few compulsory courses and a basket of elective courses.

3.2. Faculty Deployment for SUS

Vision

As noted earlier, AUD envisions a seamless sharing of faculty between different Schools and levels. Unlike in undergraduate colleges and affiliating universities, all teachers are appointed to the University and are expected to teach at all levels – undergraduate, postgraduate and research (MPhil and PhD). A small number of temporary (on contract) teaching staff is appointed for teaching Foundation courses.

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[17]Resolution No. 11/BOM(14)/29.07.2013 Appendix-7; pp.66-67

Faculty Profile

Figure 3.1 Faculty Composition
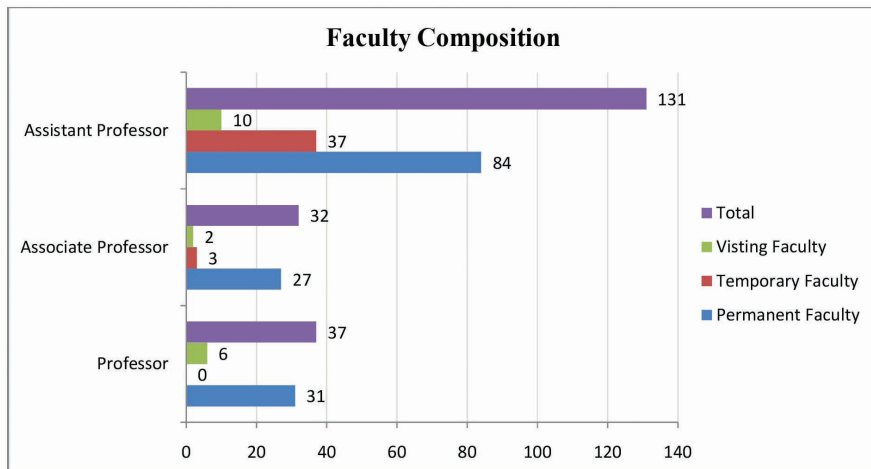
During the 2017 Monsoon Semester and 2018 Winter Semester, of the total number of faculty members appointed to the University, 65 faculty members (almost 37 per cent) taught undergraduate courses[18] (a total of 66 courses in Winter 2018 and 65 in Monsoon 2017 were on offer across the 7 BA (Hons) Programmes).

- Number of Adjunct Faculty who taught in the SUS in Monsoon Semester 2017: 8

- Number of Adjunct Faculty who taught in the SUS in Winter Semester 2018: 5

AUD's faculty profile (see Annexure D), in general, reflects a broadly Delhi/ metropolitan character. Out of the 174 permanent faculty members, 105 (almost 60 percent) are from Delhi in terms of their last educational affiliation being from a University/Institution located in Delhi. Almost 61 percent did their last job in an institution in Delhi before joining AUD.

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[18]These figures are for the 7 BA (H) Programmes on offer at the Kashmere Gate Campus and include adjunct faculty as well.

- About 33 percent of AUD's current faculty was previously employed in the University of Delhi (23.4 percent from DU colleges and 9.35 percent from Departments of DU); over 9 percent of the faculty members worked in an institution outside India before joining AUD.

Figure 3.2 Diversity in Faculty Profile by Work Experience
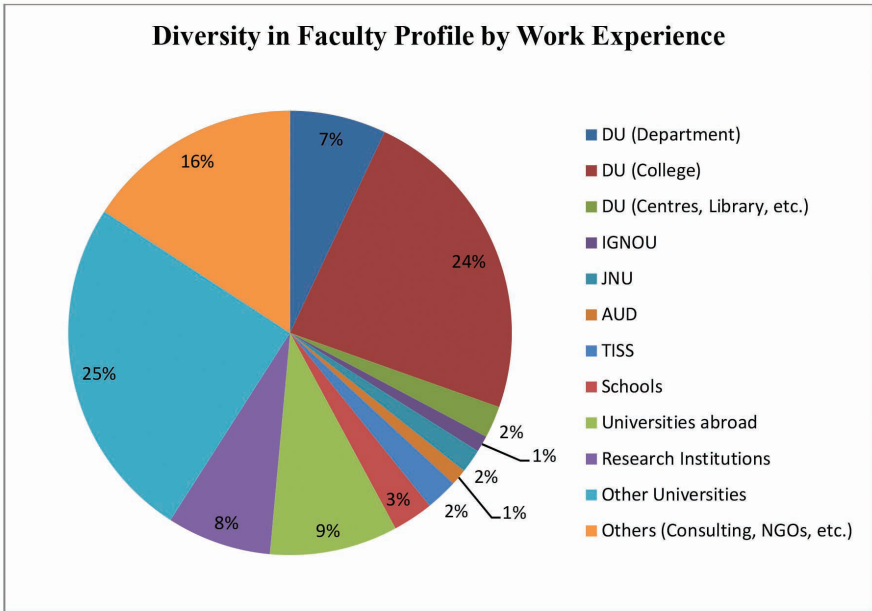
- Almost 31 percent of AUD faculty has obtained their last degree from the Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) and 22 percent have their last degree from the University of Delhi; over half the faculty at AUD has been trained in two institutions JNU and DU; and 15 percent of the faculty have their PhDs from universities outside India.

Figure 3.3 The pie chart provides the distribution of faculty by the last institution attended for PhD/MPhil/Other Academic programmes
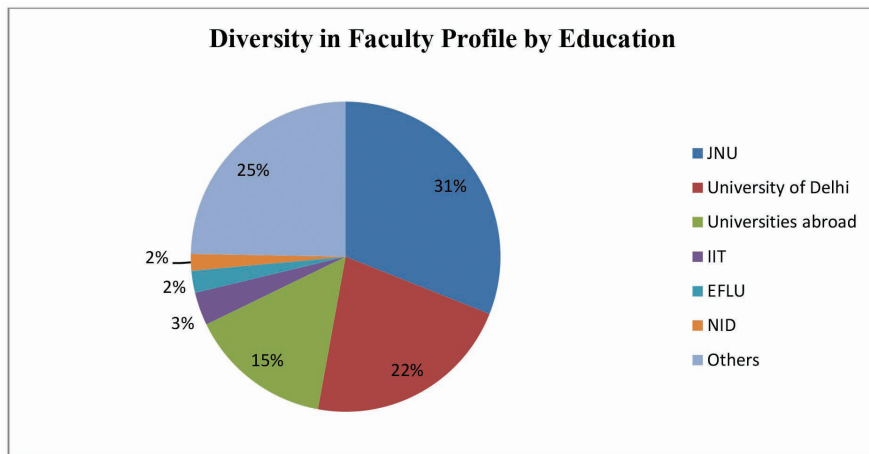
3.3. Teaching at SUS

As noted in Chapter 1, the organisation and the structure of the School of Undergraduate Studies has been a unique innovative feature of AUD. The Committee would like to emphasise that the policy of concurrent appointments at the University level and the organisational mandate for all faculty members to participate in undergraduate teaching is an innovation in the existing higher education landscape of India. However, the Committee has also noted that the organisational structure and nature of faculty deployment for UG studies has become an area of concern from the perspective of execution and governance.

The **faculty deployment policy** for undergraduate teaching was essentially student-centric in nature, attempting to flip the institutional focus to the advantage of the marginalized undergraduate student in higher education setting. From the perspective of faculty, concurrent appointment to the undergraduate school was expected to overcome, at the formative stage itself, the organisational tendencies and working within disciplinary silos and the arbitrary hierarchy between UG and PG

teaching and research. The philosophy and vision for challenging the UG-PG hierarchy was a much needed step in a HE policy environment where teaching tends to be undervalued and the research contribution overwhelmingly identified as critical for career progression.

It was hoped that the faculty appointed across Schools with distinct research foci would be able to come together to anchor a cutting-edge undergraduate programme and energise the classroom space with an eclectic and intellectually vibrant pedagogical approach. The decision to initiate undergraduate studies at AUD by offering discipline-based undergraduate programmes, however, created a need for discipline specific domain faculty, necessitating the creation of a School of Liberal Studies (SLS), where faculty could be appointed in the discipline areas of Literature, History, Sociology, Economics, and Mathematics. SLS, at the very inception stood in stark contrast to the organising principles of the other Schools at AUD. It initially housed the maximum number of faculty members in any one School. The Psychology programme was anchored by the School of Human Studies (SHS). SLS, SHS and now, the School of Letters (SoL), are almost exclusively responsible for the conduct of the UG programmes, with little contribution in the form of few courses being contributed and taught in the Foundation Basket/ Electives by other Schools.

The context of faculty recruitment and decisions about launching the four BA programmes on offer at the Karampura campus was distinct. The initial set of faculty for teaching BA programmes at the Karampura campus were recruited on contractual basis in anticipation of the government sanctioning these positions for the campus. Several issues around the vision for the campus and logistics have emerged in the two years of the running of these programmes (see Chapter 4 for details).

3.4. Reflections from Faculty: Issues and Challenges

The Committee interacted with the UG Academic Coordination Committee and with all the programme teams engaged in UG teaching at both the Kashmere Gate and the Karampura campuses. The faculty

was asked about their engagement with the undergraduate space; difficulties and limitations that they have experienced over the years in the transaction of the programmes; the perceived challenges for executing an innovative programme; and their vision for the future of the undergraduate space at AUD. The responses broadly indicate that the faculty seemed overwhelmed with the challenge of negotiating individual career progression and choices, and locating their role and commitment to the UG programmes within this scheme. Some of the issues that found articulation during the conversations with the faculty are listed below and form the basis for the Committee's observations and recommendations.

Programme Coordination: Each undergraduate programme is managed by a Programme Coordinator from the faculty group. The position of Programme Coordinator is a formal, non-statutory one, wherein the role of the Programme Coordinator is to oversee and facilitate the smooth day-to-day running of the programme. While this is the immediate part of the role, another part is to identify recurring problems, active engagement with different ideas and implementing processes for strengthening the programmes. The Programme Coordinators, however, shared that time is an issue to do this as they are usually preoccupied with other more urgent day-to-day tasks in a fire fighting mode. They also feel that they have weak administrative support, and get no relaxation in terms of teaching norms.

Teaching/Work-Load: Faculty feedback suggested that most of the teaching load for UG programmes falls on the faculty of the School of Liberal Studies (History, Sociology, Economics, and Mathematics), School of Human Studies (Psychology) and School of Letters (English). Except for these three schools, faculty contribution to undergraduate teaching is perceived to be low. Faculty members of School of Letters shared that due to the all-elective nature of the BA English programme, the faculty has to offer at least one extra course each semester. As a continuous practice, this poses a strain on those teaching the BA courses. Faculty members identified the core issues in terms of the

need for institutional mechanism for securing greater faculty resources for the conduct of the UG courses. Academic/physical infrastructure was perceived to be inadequate to the needs of the UG space. The constraints primarily include faculty resource and space. It was shared with the Committee that while funds like the *Learning Enhancement Fund* were available for strengthening the overall curricular experience for students, spending was a problem, given the multiple demands on faculty time.

Members of the Economics faculty suggested an addition of five more faculty positions to take care of the issues concerning the UG programmes. They also suggested that reviewing and re-envisioning the existing programme could be undertaken once these positions are added. One of the recently recruited Economics faculty members pointed to what she perceived as an identity crisis in the UG programme. The positioning of programmes as "innovative" and the needs of its team for it to be academically sound were perceived to be "inconsistent and even contradictory".

This observation points to a key dilemma: should the programmes be judged from the benchmark of a conventional Honours frame or from the benchmark of a multidisciplinary/innovative programme. In general, there seems to be a perceived imbalance in the teaching 'load'. Faculty feel that the time required for student-interaction has not been credited adequately. Another concern was regarding the sanctioned posts being calculated incorrectly. Mathematics faculty, for instance, has to consistently hire adjunct faculty every semester for teaching its core courses. They also felt that tutorials have added exponentially to their work load.

Faculty Deployment for UG Studies: Following were some of the concerns articulated:

- The History programme team has had issues because they have needed to rely heavily on the services of temporary and adjunct faculty to deliver several of their UG courses. This is

unlike the recently constituted 'Sociology subject group' that brings together all the sociologists from across the different schools in AUD.

- In general, UG has a disproportionately higher share of adjunct faculty, although there has been a drop in the dependence on adjunct faculty in the last academic year. Also, it has been observed that no significant value is being added to the UG teaching by the provision of Adjunct faculty, where this is being used as a stop-gap arrangement in contrast to its positive qualitative contribution towards the PG programmes.

- A concern was that while almost a hundred students each year express an interest in the course Logic and Reasoning, a course coordinated from within the Mathematics faculty, the faculty availability did not match the student demand.

- Some faculty observed that not assigning dedicated faculty positions to SUS was perhaps a collective mistake in the planning process at AUD. Concurrent appointments for SUS have not worked well in the absence of a formal structure. This was also pointed out by the MTR Committee Report. With the move towards formation of subject groups for UG programmes, faculty members expressed the hope that the situation might improve. Several faculty members, however, expressed reservations about the proposal for a separate, 'dedicated' undergraduate faculty. They preferred the concurrent faculty structure as more conducive of faculty aspirations for teaching across levels.

Student Support and Mentoring: Faculty members identified a major challenge regarding mentoring and poor infrastructural support for students. They believed that while some form of mentoring is practiced, its implementation is difficult and its intensity varies across programmes. Faculty members acknowledged the need for greater attention to mentoring UG level students. However, they felt that the faculty shortage and faculty engaged for multiple administrative tasks

posed a challenge for mentoring of the UG cohorts. Tutorials were also a concern. The inclusion of tutorials does not increase the credit "workload" for the teachers but it does increase the number of hours they engage with the students. Currently, it appears that there is the trend of tutorials becoming exceptions rather than norm[19].

Diversity in student profile was viewed as interesting by some faculty members and challenging by others. Some of the faculty seemed to indicate that they are servicing 'average' students. Other voices, however, expressed a more optimistic aspiration for the UG space at AUD, arguing that the most satisfying aspect of teaching UG courses was to witness the steep learning curve among students. Regarding why AUD's own UG students are unable to successfully compete with graduates from other universities for admission to AUD's PG programmes, faculty had different views. Some attributed this to weaker mentorship, and relatively poor infrastructure; while others attributed it to a relatively 'weak' cohort of students admitted to the AUD UG programmes. Faculty expressed dissatisfaction with the two hour class slot for first year students, citing relatively short attention spans. Some suggested that there was a disjunction here between faculty's need for intellectualizing issues and their understanding of diverse student needs, which percolated to the pedagogical space as well.

Given that the Karampura Campus UG student profile was different from that of the Kashmere Gate campus, faculty reported that almost 90 percent of the teaching at the Karampura campus had to be done in Hindi. Some faculty said that at the Karampura campus they missed being part of a vibrant intellectual atmosphere and prospect of teaching 'better' students. Thus, it seems that the Karampura campus was perceived as a peripheral campus on account of the nature of student achievement and competence, lack of a unique identity, inadequate

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[19]1-credit implies one hour of didactic teaching per week for 16 weeks or two hours of tutorials/workshop/seminar. This effectively means that a 4-credit course with tutorial, could translate into 3 hours of lectures and 2 hours of tutorials, or as much as eight hours of workshop-based engagement

campus and intellectual life. Faculty members shared that a fresh undergraduate student perceives them to be like college teachers, and responds to AUD as akin to any DU college.

To sum up, the Committee surmised from student and faculty feedback that the UG programme has explicitly suffered on account of faculty's **primary/preferential engagement with their parent School and associated PG programme.** Based on the views expressed by some of the faculty members, the Committee also feels that they were unable to integrate the issue of social justice in their approach to students as well as pedagogy. The Committee also noted that it is perhaps counter-intuitive for many among the faculty to be motivated to teach at the UG level[20]. Over the years, it would seem that fatigue has set in and administrative responsibilities have taken a toll on student mentoring. It emerged from conversations with different programme teams that the heterogeneity in the academic composition of students has been a concern over the years and the initial idealism in planning has given way to some of the core components of the programmes being diluted in the face of student diversity.

Planning, Change and Innovation: Faculty members, primarily from the Kashmere Gate UG programmes, recalled the initial years of working towards re-envisioning UG education to creatively reposition disciplinary canons. They were then part of a dialogic process that linked research to the curriculum. However, as the UG programme was structured and the compulsory foundation courses, Logic and Reasoning, and Introduction to Social Sciences, became optional, the focus of the foundation courses diluted. This has weakened the

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[20]During the interactions with different faculty groups, barring the faculty of Vocational Studies programme, and the core team of SSH programme, no other faculty group explicitly articulated the student aspirations from their programme and university. Programme teams and individual faculty members largely articulated faculty aspirations and perspective during the meetings; they seem to be unable to articulate or think through student aspirations and needs.

academic support for students in need of perspective-building. It has also resulted in a disproportionate number of electives being offered as optional Foundation Courses. Formulation of norms for faculty deployment, such as, teaching two courses in PG and only one course in UG, inhibits the possibility to sustain a continuous engagement with students to track their progression. One member concurred about the SUS stating, "We are not sure if SUS is a real-time School…with no full-time dedicated faculty, it is a '*No Woman's Land'.* Some faculty felt that even though the BA programme is not in a bad shape[21], it seems to be struggling . Several faculty members felt that much of the innovation was attempted during 2010-12, and very little further innovation has been attempted after that. The general sense across programme teams was that over the years, "...we have been only replicating. Our students are not experiencing any innovation/difference". The new faculty members, who have joined after 2014, find the structure inflexible to experiment and feel that 'innovations', even if they once existed, have ossified. Another challenge relates to the academic governance of Schools and programmes, particularly at a multi-programme school like the SUS. The structure and processes seem to inhibit and delay processes of curriculum revision and updating.

While reflecting on the critical feedback from students, some programme teams acknowledged that a cutting edge innovative UG programme is not being delivered in the same spirit in which it was promised.Teams felt that not being able to live up to the curricular imagination in a dynamic sense was a major challenge. A few of the faculty members noted that some degree of inflexibility appears to have entered the system. Some teachers felt that at UG level there should be a greater number of research-oriented courses and field-based engagement[22]. Regarding the SSH programme, faculty emphasized the need for upgrading a few elective trajectories of the UG programmes to the level of 'major'.

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[21]A senior faculty member expressed this concern as: "although the programme is not in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU), but the dream of the ideal programme is in the ICU"

[22]Interface with PRADAN may be explored.

Hindi and Political Science faculty felt that the problem of SSH could be solved if there were more majors, essentially implying the need for more faculty recruitment for the "at present" minor subjects. However, there were no reflections on how this could translate into redressing the marginalisation of students enrolled in the SSH trajectory.

Academic Governance: On the basis of their interactions, the Committee observed that a significant gap exists between AUD's ideal of participatory governance and its practice. Several faculty members, particularly those from the Social Science and Humanities (SSH) programme, observed that they did not meet regularly, apart from formal Academic Coordination Committee (ACC) meetings. There was little opportunity to reflect on what is happening across courses in relation to their programme. There appears to be a disjuncture between expectation and reality, particularly in the anchoring of the UG programmes by the designated programme teams. The challenge seems to stem from the current orientation of the faculty. How to distinguish approaches to teaching the two categories, the disciplinary major cohort and the SSH cohort, did not seem clear to many faculty members. Faculty suggested the appointment of a discipline coordinator to act as a link between various programmes (BA, MA, and MPhil, PhD) within a discipline. It was felt that in the absence of a department structure, the role of a discipline coordinator would be vital.

3.5. Recommendations

Sharing a widely expressed view among students and faculty, the Committee strongly feels that the UG life is not just about academics. The experience of being in a university classroom and life outside has to be in sync. AUD as an institution would need to plan and innovate in order to enrich the corporate life on its campuses, despite the existing constraints of infrastructure. Exclusively tying innovation and creativity in curriculum-planning and teaching to resource/infrastructure availability is perhaps inadvisable for the AUD teaching community, particularly since the majority of the HEIs in the country are managing on shoestring budgets and significantly less resource support than AUD.

Given the fact that the infrastructural constraints are not going to be entirely settled in the near future, the focus needs to be on thinking through ways of making UG teaching viable across multiple campuses. More incentives are required to create a nurturing space for faculty to take ownership of the UG programme. At the same time, it is also important to engage in dialogue with students and understand their needs and expectations of courses. These steps need to be actively pursued to infuse the UG space with more creativity and vitality.

The Committee feels that staffing patterns and responsibilities need clearer articulation so as to address concerns of all the Schools in the delivery of the UG courses. As it exists, the pyramid is very narrow with the Dean SUS, who has little staff support, at the top. Without a 'dedicated' faculty, it will be a challenge to sustain processes of change, introspection, and planning for future. A faculty dedicated exclusively to the UG space, for a period of three years, could provide the core faculty for sustaining the UG programmes.

Possible directions for revisiting the organisational structure of undergraduate studies:

The Committee feels that the structure for undergraduate studies as exists at present is neither tenable nor sustainable. A significant challenge for AUD will be to find ways of getting a group of 'dedicated' faculty who are excited by the undergraduate space. Interactions with different programme teams and discussions on new models/new UG programmes, reflect a degree of resistance to experimentation. Engaging with UG students places additional demands on teacher time (and energy) which may be a reason for some of the resistance. UG teaching seems to hold an element of coercion. It is also unevenly distributed across Schools. AUD may consider the following:

a.) Have a dedicated faculty for UG programmes, with the flexibility for UG faculty to teach across schools and PG programmes as well.

b.) New campuses need not duplicate the structure and design of existing campuses. Each campus could work towards identifying a novel focus and methodology for the UG programmes. Dedicated faculty may be appointed for teaching these programmes, while retaining the possibility for faculty members to teach across the PG and Research programmes on the campus.

c.) The current School of Undergraduate Studies be completely restructured on new principles more relevant to the needs of students, and develop a new proactive role for its interface with the newer (and distinctive) UG programmes developed on different campuses. An optional fourth year could be added on for students who wish to add value to their academic portfolio, by engagement in field study, and be enabled to audit courses across the multiple campuses at AUD.

d.) Develop rigorous, in-depth, induction processes for faculty appointed/assigned to undergraduate teaching. This could be a combination of workshops, collaborative learning, classroom simulations; familiarization with IT enabled learning methodologies, and above all building ownership around AUD's vision of creative inclusion.

e.) This orientation process of induction be ongoing and spread across at least one academic year, (or where applicable, the probation period). It would be crucial to build focus groups around each cohort, with opportunity to collectively revisit mandates. Without this process, the distinctiveness of the pedagogy for the UG space is likely to be lost.

f.) This becomes all the more pressing since, as it stands, almost 61 percent of faculty members at AUD have taught previously at Delhi based institutions including the Central Universities in Delhi, Research Institutions, Schools, NGOs, and Consultancies and may, in all likelihood, carry into AUD assumptions of UG teaching that are at variance with the AUD vision.

g.) In order to fashion a new conceptual vocabulary on UG teaching, AUD must provide early correctives to possible duplication of teaching methodologies from institutes where pedagogies and course objectives have followed more traditional and primarily didactic pedagogies. It is to be noted that this induction process would be different from the 'orientation' and 'refresher' courses (within the CPDHE programmes or the Faculty 'Recharge' scheme sanctified by the UGC). The Committee feels that given the diversity that AUD reckons within the undergraduate classroom, the UG space has the potential for becoming a laboratory for pedagogical innovation for social justice. Impetus for creative pedagogy and curriculum can emanate from this heterogeneity in learning needs across students. The induction process must foreground AUD's mission statement of bridging Access with Excellence.

Strengthening UG Teaching:

- The Committee suggests that research/postgraduate students be taken in as teaching assistants. This may be done by structuring a teaching practicum into every research/post graduate programme. TAs could help out with assessments and also facilitate peer-to-peer learning, thereby offsetting the faculty workload. This could also serve as an incentive for senior professors to contribute to UG teaching.

- The Committee feels that it is critical to create channels of mobility for students by bridging the UG-PG divide. While faculty have mobility and can offer courses across campuses, students are unable to fully exercise this choice. This variance needs to be mitigated. The Committee recommends the introduction of the Pro-Seminar as an option for facilitating student choices, mobility and a seamless UG-PG continuum. This arrangement provides a different conceptualisation of deployment for teaching at SUS and faculty mobility across levels.

Modalities of the Pro-Seminar

The Pro-Seminar is envisaged as an advanced optional for UG students to exercise their choice and for faculty, it is expected to create a non-coercive mechanism to engage with the undergraduate space. Instead of simply expecting faculty to move across the UG-PG spectrum, students' active choice and mobility could be enhanced through the means of a Pro-Seminar. From the faculty members' perspective, it is envisaged that they could offer a Pro-Seminar course either at advance UG level or as part of a PG programme. In a PG course designed as a Pro-Seminar, a select number of advanced UG students can enroll. Pro-Seminars are designed to creatively link the UG-PG continuum and rethink the cultures of teaching and learning. Here, apart from the stipulated electives of the UG programmes, a student could make the choices based on readiness to engage with the domain. The onus within this arrangement will be on students to make these choices. Through Pro-Seminars, UG students would get access to the postgraduate ecosystem that can facilitate, among other processes, active dialogue between the UG and PG students. A series of such Pro-Seminars could be planned for the senior students from the fourth semester onwards. Upto 50 percent of the credit load in the final year could be through the Pro-Seminar courses; or through intensive courses offered during the summer. Evaluation scales/instruments could be different for UG students in these shared spaces. Upto 20 percent seats could be reserved for UG students in each Pro-Seminar. Every undergraduate may enroll for any thing between 2-6 Pro-Seminars.

Chapter 4

Capacity Building and Professionalising the Undergraduate Space

4.1. Vocational Studies at AUD

The School of Vocational Studies (SVS) was established in the year 2017 with a core mandate to respond to Delhi's changing demography. It was mandated to address the aspirations of a large number of first-generation high school graduates keen to pursue full-time or part-time tertiary education that enables them to participate effectively in the fast-growing economy by acquiring livelihood skills. The attempt was to envision the University as a space that is able to respond to the life-long learning needs of diverse learners by offering opportunities for professional capacity building. The flexibility in the Vocational programmes through multiple exit and entry points are critical for opening up learning avenues for prospective students at any point in their growth trajectory across their career span. In this sense, SVS becomes a critical space for expanding the conventional meanings of 'inclusion' and 'access' in the context of a university.

SVS currently offers three B.Voc. programmes in *Tourism and Hospitality, Retail Management, and Early Childhood Centre Management and Entrepreneurship* (ECCME). The programme structure is as per the National Skills Qualification Framework (NSQF) and curricula have been designed in partnership with industry experts/associations, and also institutions like National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC). The B.Voc. (ECCME) programme has been developed in collaboration with the Centre for Early Childhood Education and Development (CECED) at AUD.

The School was established through a series of consultations and after an extensive study of the US model of community colleges. To begin with, only those programmes were initiated that did not require extensive investment for infrastructure or personnel. It was considered more suitable to focus on areas that offer employment opportunities

in and around Delhi. Retail Management, Tourism and Hospitality, and Early Childhood Centre Management and Entrepreneurship were therefore prioritised as the initial set of programmes for the School.

The B.Voc. programmes have multiple entry and exit points leading to: **a.** *Certificate* after successful completion of the first Semester (awarded only for Retail and Tourism trajectory); **b.** *Diploma* after successful completion of the first two semesters; **c.** *Advanced Diploma* after successful completion of first four semesters; and **d.** *Degree after* the successful completion of all six semesters.**The Committee recognizes this flexibility in programme structure as a unique feature of the Vocational programmes. The Committee feels that the flexibility could be strengthened by instituting channels of mobility across the vocational and liberal streams, using some best practices from the Australian and Singapore experiences which have done well in this context.**

The B.Voc. programmes during the first cycle have been promoted through visits to government schools across the city and regular advertisements during the time of admissions. The Committee feels that there is scope for different approaches for promoting the B.Voc. programmes. **SVS should creatively plan its publicity drive and highlight the unique context in which the 'vocational' is located in a liberal arts and humanities space of the University.**

4.1.1. Issues and Recommendations:

1. Revisiting the perspective for the School and B.Voc. programmes the Committee felt that:

   • An important initiative in higher education has been a new emphasis by the government on 'skilling'. With more than a million Indians projected to enter the working age each month for the next decade and a half, Universities are entrusted with the task of building both capacity and competency. AUD has stepped into this space, but even as it builds and expands its B.Voc. programme at

the Karampura campus, it needs to ensure that this does not meet the fate of earlier attempts at 'vocationalization' at institutions of higher education. The traditional approach will only ghettoize and marginalize a programme that has potentialities if imparted appositely by the learning environment and ethos of AUD.

- The B.Voc. programme structure, framed according to the UGC guidelines and the National Skills Qualification Framework (NSQF) is not adequate to reinterpret the 'Vocational' in the AUD context. Further, Vocational Studies at AUD appears to be conceptualised and organised from a traditional 'vocational' perspective, still distant from the 'professional' end of the continuum. The Committee feels that in order to overcome the conventional and limited imagination for the Vocational stream and to reinterpret it as a cutting edge and professionally empowering space for students, a critical shift is required at the level of discourse: from **skills to competencies.** The Committee, therefore, feels that the *Vocational Studies Programmes* and the core mandate of the School of Vocational Studies, needs to be reviewed in its early years.

2. Programme Nomenclature

- A more creative nomenclature for the programmes needs to be thought through to signify that AUD's vocational programmes are not just training for a limited vocation, but are aimed at providing a well-rounded professional learning experience for students. **The nomenclature of the programmes should emphasise how AUD's vocational programmes are uniquely situated and close to a professional programme rather than a conventional vocational programme.** This effort will reflect well not just on AUD but will go a long way to enhance the prestige of the hitherto marginalised space of the 'vocational' in the realm of higher education.

3. Interface with other Schools and Programmes at AUD

- **Vocational Studies must not work in silos.** The School needs to proactively find creative ways to imagine and locate interfaces with the liberal programmes offered at AUD.

- The Committee feels strongly that a 'pure' vocational degree should not ghettoize vocational studies students into a non-academic stream; options should be available for students, therefore, for lateral mobility into liberal arts and humanities courses as well. A vocational studies student at AUD should have the possibility of pursuing an advanced degree in a social science/humanities stream.

- While there is the need for thinking through mobility channels for vocational studies students into the general/liberal UG/PG programmes, it is equally important to also articulate mobility channels for students from general/liberal streams to the Vocational. There is a need to augment the General Education component in AUD's B.Voc. programme.

4. Faculty at SVS

- The Committee, during their interaction with the SVS team, particularly noticed and appreciated the enthusiasm, commitment, and concern for students among the SVS faculty.

- The Committee was informed that SVS administers its B.Voc. programmes through Programme Managers (a contractual position), who also bear academic responsibilities of curriculum development and teaching. Additionally, there is a General Education Manager who teaches general/liberal courses across all three programmes.

- 'Programme Manager' is not a standard faculty position, and confusion arises on whether they are in the academic cadre

or the administrative cadre. This confusion has caused some disjunction in the process of their assimilation in the academic life at AUD.

- Since the Programme Managers are expected to have an academic profile and contribute to teaching and mentoring students, it is essential that AUD removes the artificial barrier of the current nomenclature between the other faculty and B.Voc. 'Programme Managers'.

- To clear the existing confusion, **the Committee recommends that a more creative nomenclature be used in a manner that the vocational stream and its team is not marginalised in any way in the University space.**

5. Students at SVS

- The Committee feels that given the commitment of the University to provide meaningful and relevant tertiary education to students from marginalised contexts, and the subsequent diversity that AUD reckons with in its UG classrooms; the undergraduate space at AUD holds the potential to become a laboratory for pedagogical innovation for achieving social justice.

- The Committee would like to note the enthusiasm and confidence with which students at SVS shared their experience with the Committee members during the interaction.

- Most students shared that they joined the B.Voc. programme in order to graduate with better prospects of employability. They were satisfied with their programme so far and felt that they have evolved in terms of confidence and competencies, even in the short time that they have been undergraduate students at AUD.

- Students, however, expressed their discontentment with the fact that they were yet to make connections with peers from other

programmes at the Karampura campus. B.Voc. students are unable to interact with University peers from other programmes, both inside the classroom space as well as outside it. The full-day classroom engagement with a 9 to 5 schedule, keeps the students from experiencing the richness of University life as it keeps them away from participating in any extra-curricular activities.

- Students felt that they had directly reached the world of work from their School classrooms without any tangible experience of the 'culture' of their University beyond the classroom space. Some shared that while they knew what it meant to be an SVS student, they were not quite sure what it felt like to be an AUD student.

- It is important to purposively create spaces to nurture cultural and social interaction and engagement on campus for a meaningful and enriching learning experience for all students at the undergraduate level. Student diversity at AUD indicates that it is all the more critical to facilitate, particularly for students from marginalised contexts, an experience of immersion into the vibrant corporate life that a university space must offer.

- The programme structure and the on-job-training (OJT) compels the SVS students to be confined to either classrooms or internship sites. This translates into inadequate exposure to cultural and social engagement at the University for these students. This critical gap needs to be bridged so that the B.Voc. students, (for whom this may very well be the terminal educational degree), are able to acquire multi-faceted competencies before they join the world of work.

- The Committee recommends that **lateral movement of students across vocational and discipline-based courses should be made possible and promoted.** This will facilitate social interaction among peers across the two streams, bring

vibrancy to the University culture, and help create the pathway to reimagine the "vocational" in the university context.

6. SVS Programme Design

- **Modularity has to be inbuilt into the programme structure in order to facilitate greater possibilities of learning across the three specialisations offered at SVS.** For instance, students from the Management trajectory felt they could benefit from taking few courses of the Tourism and Hospitality stream. A BA History student could also benefit from such an exposure. This possibility needs to be opened up, just as a tourism student should be able to take courses from the basket of History major or the newly introduced programmes of Global Studies or Sustainable Urbanism.

- The Committee feels that **greater clarity is required regarding objectives and expectations from internship/on-job-training.** Students were unclear about performance requirements here. Often, students end up doing a range of menial tasks at the on-job-training because there appears to be a communication gap between the SVS and the companies providing internships and placements.

- Student feedback indicated that in some cases evaluation by the on-job-training companies is not taking place appropriately and that linkages between their course work and on-job-training needed to be stronger. On-job-training supervisors are often unaware of the curriculum, programme requirements, and internship objectives. Regular briefings and mid-semester interface between the OJTs and 'programme managers' are essential.

- **The planning of internship process, therefore, needs greater clarity.** The Committee feels it would be helpful to have a set of documents/handbook prepared specifically for the OJT partner

teams covering all the specific details relevant for a rigorous internship experience for students.

7. Curriculum

- The students also articulated the need for more enhanced IT training. They shared that basic computer training is given to them but during their OJT they find themselves lacking. It was requested by students that they receive advanced training in a variety of relevant software. The focus in the SVS programmes has to be on enhancement of competencies of students and their generic skills in a sustained manner. **Specific workshop courses focusing on a range of competencies may be offered in an integrated manner through the entire duration of the programme** and not be confined only to early semesters.

- The Committee noted that students were appreciative of the General Education (GE) courses, which seem to be providing balance to their education. The SVS GE components have been conceptualised and are being transacted in a creative and innovative manner. These efforts and innovative pedagogical approaches being tried out at SVS, highlight the tremendous possibilities that exist for experimenting with curricular transaction at the undergraduate level. The students would like the General Education (GE) component to gradually enhance their threshold of difficulty over the years.

- The Generic element and the possibilities that obtain in a University like AUD for the planning and transaction of these courses, hold great potential for distinguishing AUD's vocational programmes from other conventional ones being offered in colleges and polytechnics. The Committee is of the view that **the General Education (GE) component of the B.Voc. programme needs to be enhanced, and conceptualized** in sync with the foundation level courses offered for the other UG programmes.

- The Committee recommends that **SVS should strengthen its relationship with businesses particularly within and around the Karampura campus,** as this could lead to opportunities for on-job-training and allow students to be closer to the campus.

- In terms of future goals for SVS the range of programmes on offer be expanded, once the present programmes are consolidated. It was shared that SVS has been approached by a Chartered Accountancy firm to explore avenues of collaboration for a B.Voc. programme in Accountancy. Enquiries have also been made to the SVS about programmes in Journalism. These avenues could be actively explored by the School, subject to resource and space availability. Deepening the B.Voc. experience rather than creating a multiplicity of vocational options, should be the priority—especially given the dynamic nature of the job market.

4.2. Possible Directions for Restructuring the UG Space

The UG programmes currently being taught at the Kashmere Gate campus were shaped out of a process of actively reimagining the conventional discipline-based BA Honours programmes. The facilitating aspect of this process was the fact that SUS and the UG programmes were situated in an ecosystem where an organic link existed between the UG programme domains and the faculty profile of the other Schools at the Kashmere Gate campus. These factors contributed significantly to the planning and teaching of the UG programmes. However, the context in which the University will have to engage with its undergraduate space has shifted radically with the emergence of the multi-campus context and future plans for expansion. The stated vision for the University is to grow to about 14000 students over the next seven to ten years. This raises major concerns about quality and sustainability in the context of shrinking resources and paucity of faculty and administrative staff.

At present, UG programmes are offered at the Kashmere Gate and the Karampura campuses. The UG programmes were initiated at the Karampura campus in 2016. Several issues around the vision for the

campus and logistics have emerged in the two years of the running of the programmes at the Karampura Campus. Since the launch of the four BA programmes in 2016, three new Schools have been set up on the Karampura campus: the School of Law, Governance and Citizenship (SLGC) (which offers a postgraduate programme in Law, Politics and Society and UG programme in Law and Politics); and the SVS (which offers three verticals of BVoc Programmes); and the new School of Global Affairs (which offers UG and PG programmes in Global Studies and Urban Studies). The key questions that emerge in the multi-campus context, as evident from the experience of the Karampura campus are:

a.) How should AUD envisage an undergraduate education which would utilize the human resources that the new Schools and the new programme teams can offer?;

b.) Should the UG programmes across campuses reflect the unique character and strengths of the faculty profile recruited for each campus or should the Kashmere Gate UG template remain the standard template for duplication?; and

c.) What should be the foci of undergraduate programmes at each campus?

4.2.1. Recommendations:

Sustaining a federating structure with inter-movement across UG and PG will remain a challenge for AUD. As administration becomes complex, structures that better respond to that complexity have to be shaped. The Committee has taken note of the three new UG programmes being conceptualised for the Karampura campus. The School of Law, Governance and Citizenship (SLGC) has designed a UG programme within the School which is a departure from the existing practice of housing all UG programmes at SUS in Kashmere Gate. **A different model is being explored and the structure of its administration needs to be configured carefully.** The same will apply to BA (H) Sustainable Urbanism, and BA (H) Global Studies.

The Committee noted that SUS leadership had reservations about the feasibility of these programmes owing to the following reasons: a) perceived lack of demand for unconventional BA programmes; b) desirability and feasibility of interdisciplinary UG programme; and c) lack of faculty resources at present to teach interdisciplinary UG programmes. Although, the debate over the desirability and feasibility of interdisciplinary thematic vs discipline-based first degree is not a settled debate anywhere across the world, the Committee notes that AUD as a State university located in the NCR has the requisite intellectual resources to incubate an alternate and innovative approach to UG teaching and curriculum framing.

In the light of these apprehensions the Committee recommends:

1) AUD must seize this opportunity inherent in the multi-campus context to explore different models. However, re-visioning a multi-campus opportunity needs meticulous planning with considerable thought and foresight based on the learnings from the existing UG experience.

2) SUS's interface with programmes offered across campuses should be clearly spelt out, so as to create collaborations across campuses with appropriate academic oversight.

3) It is important to think through the relationship of SUS to programmes on other campuses to foresee how this may impact the multi-campus context. The academic structures should facilitate transportability of new courses across campuses into some of the conventional programmes offered at SUS.

Following are some basic principles to be considered

➢ Duplication of faculty and programmes across campuses, in the long run, could prove untenable and unsustainable. Reproduction of the Kashmere Gate campus model for the UG programme would require duplication of Kashmere Gate faculty profile for the

new campuses as well. Therefore, **replicating the Kashmere Gate SUS UG programmes seems difficult and unfeasible at this point.**

➢ Each campus could have a unique character with organic linkages between the UG and PG programmes offered at a campus. An active and well thought through interface along with transportability of some electives and Foundation courses may be worked out.

➢ Thus, the multi-campus model must consciously resist creating a Centre-Periphery sensibility. While the original campus continues to provide anchor in the initial phases of development, where necessary, the attempt must be to make each campus 'self-sufficient' with a niche specialty and an ethos that reflects the original mission, but engages with it continually in context specific ways, keeping locale, demographics and the priorities of each student cohort in mind. At the same time a fine balance has to be maintained in order to avoid campus isolation and the perpetuation of an affiliate type of a system.

➢ The undergraduate programmes offered in the new campuses should reflect the interest areas, specialisations and strengths of the faculty appointed to the campus, as also develop interest among learners in newer disciplines while keeping a balance with the core of traditional disciplines. **The imprint of the Schools contributing to the UG programmes should be distinctly visible in the conceptualisation and curricular focus of the programmes.** While the courses/programmes offered could cater to the emerging needs of the society, the idea of the university must distinguish it from a mere "service provider" of instrumentalist transactional learning. The idea of the university as a ruminative space retaining high standards of academic and intellectual engagement is crucial.

➢ Whether students or faculty should shift between campuses is a matter for further thought. In general, to create a sense of rootedness for both, they should not all be shuttling for different courses—or routinely flitting across campuses. Keeping the PG and UG courses for the same disciplinary set at the same location will make it possible to integrate the programmes and students better, especially when space issues have been sorted out. Further, the idea of students working within the campus is one that should be explored. This reinforces the sense of belonging and ownership of a campus. A seamless engagement both within and outside the classroom through co-curricular activities will be essential to build the ethos of an institution.

➢ Greater attention needs to be paid to the pedagogical transaction and learner/ing centric activities in the design of the UG programmes for both existing and emerging UG programmes. The new UG programmes need to increase channels for undergraduate students to engage with professional, social and institutional contexts outside the classroom. This is as critical for a liberal arts graduate as it is for a vocational studies student. Both need to be empowered with competencies for successfully transitioning to the professional life after graduation. Several of AUD's PG programmes provide opportunities for intensive field engagement. A possible direction for restructuring the UG space can be to actively institute such opportunities for the UG students, through internships with NGOs, multilateral organisations and other relevant sites.

➢ There is a need to find creative ways of interpreting UGC formulations/guidelines with respect to the undergraduate and vocational curricula and credit frameworks. Like the vocational programmes at AUD, the other undergraduate programmes should also, for the benefit of students, adopt a modular approach. Open channel access between the vocational and liberal arts courses is desirable for two-way value addition.

The real test of creativity would lie in what kind of patterns of interactions are developed and institutionally sustained across and between campuses, so that they do not end up being **hermetically sealed, solipsistic entities.** The nature of these interactions, supported by regular transport arrangements between campuses, will show a way towards a sustainable and mutually enriching organisational structure.

Chapter 5

Framing Futures

(Some Additional Reflections)

5.1. Introduction

As a State funded public university established in the 21st century located in the capital city, AUD is uniquely positioned, given its vision and mission to fashion a conceptual vocabulary that speaks to an innovative convergence of equity, access and academic excellence. This could be of use to HEIs that often grapple with the perceived tensions of delivering on the essential goals of democracy and social justice.

AUD's founding vision of the undergraduate space as the fulcrum and spring board for the realization of this enterprise is much needed, since the distinctiveness and promise of the otherwise fecund space, tends to get invisibilized in much of the official discourse on universities. There is a great deal of focus on school education as the foundation and also on universities as the front of research and higher learning. The undergraduate space is often framed as a hyphen between these two axes. Yet, this is the space that is home to the **majority** of India's much-publicized 'demographic dividend'. In the complex and variegated ecosystem of higher education in the country, of 35.7 million enrolled in HEIs (Gross Enrolment Ratio 25.2) 28 million are in the UG space, i.e. 79.4%[23].

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[23]It is the largest in the world in terms of number of institutions – 864 (278 are affiliating) universities and 40,026 colleges. Standalone institute 11669. It has 817,000 teachers on its rolls. In addition to 40 central universities (17 established during the first four years of the Eleventh Five Year Plan), there is a network of nearly 300 specialized science and technology institutions, including more than 200 laboratories. Besides, there are 1914 Polytechnics and a large number of industrial research and development laboratories in the private and public sectors. The growth in professional education from the time of Independence has perhaps been even more dramatic. From a base of zero, it has grown to 15 Indian National Institutes of Technology (NITs) and 24 Indian Institutes of Information Technology (IIITs). There are 3,000 colleges of engineering, technology and architecture, 2,100 medical colleges, 3400 teacher-training colleges, and nearly 3000 other professional and technical institutions in areas such as agriculture, law, management, computer applications and information technology (2009-10).

source: Annual Status of Education Reports (ASER) 2016-2017

AUD has the unique advantage – and responsibility – to foreground this space, in terms of innovative and creative practice, give utterance to a language of its unexplored possibilities even as it engages to prepare its students to be **"futures ready, world ready and work ready".** But as T.S. Eliot had said 'for last year's words belong to last year's language, and next year's words await another voice. And to make an end is to make a beginning'. It is in this spirit that the UG Review Committee 'revisits' the UG space in AUD, engaging with its many strengths and potentialities in response to the current challenges it faces – offering some suggestions for course corrections, so that it is better prepared to creatively respond to the demands of a rapidly changing social and educational scenario.

AUD had set itself the task of imagining a pedagogy that sought not merely to cultivate the intellect, but also to balance the ethical, ecological, emotional, creative, social and aspirational needs of a community of learners. As an inclusive and collaborative learning environment that sustains ruminative, integrative, aspirational, dialogic, democratic, secular and engendered (women comprise 59% of the UG learning cohort at AUD) spaces, its undergraduate programmes could represent a compelling work-in-progress. It can also provide the best practices that respond to the burgeoning heterogeneity of the HEI space where erstwhile marginalized groups have entered in large numbers[24].

The UG space is the first port of call where literate newly enfranchised groups enter the world of civic and (in some cases) social consciousness. It is a space of aspiration but equally of contestation and collision. It carries with it the responsibilities of testing India's success or otherwise of its ability to deal with its teeming diversity. It is perhaps the most

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[24]The higher education system has now become very complex with a large variety of institutions-Central Universities, State Universities, deemed universities, unitary and affiliating universities; National Institutes of Importance and research institutions; Inter-University Centres, undergraduate colleges and postgraduate colleges; conventional universities and open universities; public and private universities and colleges; general institutions of higher education, minority institutions, and universities and colleges exclusively meant for certain groups such as women. Some are highly specialized institutions and many are comprehensive in their coverage of areas of study.

heterogeneous of spaces – a multiplicity of forms, formations and articulations.

The recent Annual Status of Education Reports (ASER) have highlighted lacunas in the learning and progression of grade 8 level students with regard to basic proficiencies in language, Math, study skills and cognitive preparedness for age appropriate academic tasks[25].

While the demography and profile of youth aspiring for higher education in the National Capital Region may differ from the ASER cohort (which included 26 rural districts across 24 states, 23,868 households and 28,323 youth aged 14-18), it is expected that an average undergraduate at AUD may as well be someone struggling to overcome the inadequacies generated by an indifferent school education. The UG space then being in many ways the custodian of the rights of learners to 'higher' education is expected to redress the learning deficits and gaps carried over from secondary education. It is also, where the policies of affirmative action and reservation are first implemented in the continuum of learning and becomes the litmus test of an HEIs sensitivity to diversity and inclusion. AUD's special mission exhorts it then to develop robust practices of substantive rather than numeric representation.

The UG space has to perform the tasks of bridging equity concerns with those of excellence through capacity building among learners, scaffolding their progress and movement out of the morass of poor quality school education. The current higher education scenario is characterized by dwindling allocation for higher education institutions (state universities in particular), increasing aspirations for the BA (undergraduate/tertiary education) degree, sharp differences and heterogeneity in learning capacity of the HE aspiring student. Innovative ideas, means and committed institutional resources are required to

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[25]ASER 2017, for example starkly highlighted that despite increasing levels of school enrolment in the country of the cohort of 14 to 18 year olds, among those surveyed, almost 25 per cent cannot read a basic text meant for 5-7 years old children, in their mother tongue; 57 per cent are unable to do basic divisions. Of the 18 year olds enrolled in colleges and schools, 60 per cent can read English, though one-fifth of those cannot comprehend what they read. About 36 per cent adolescents could not correctly name India's capital.

bridge the gap between the claims of bridging equity at the point of access with excellence in the form of facilitating achievement of stated learning outcomes through engaged teaching-learning processes and active mentoring.

Hence, revisiting the idea of 'merit' especially as it pertains to admission policies particularly at the UG and also at the PG level is recommended.

5.2. Revisiting Merit

AUD as a model was an attempt to exemplify how the twin concerns of equity and excellence could be bridged. With more than 5 million people entering the 15-24 age-group annually, buttressed by government policies and interventions like the Sarva Siksha Abhiyan, a significantly large number of youth are graduating from schools and are aspirants for higher education. Yet, a weak foundation of cognitive and non-cognitive skills in early childhood and middle school years makes it much harder for them to take advantage of higher education opportunities. The effects of affirmative action policies have been highly contested and contentious. Yet once we recognize the causal contribution of other inequalities towards the unequal distribution of 'merit' and hence of higher educational opportunities, as Satish Deshpande has pointed out, this opens creative doors to interventions for their redress. It is possible in the AUD space to 'reconstruct' what counts as merit, without succumbing to the danger of what Pratap Bhanu Mehta has called the 'tyranny of compulsory identities' – to establish that affirmative action is not incompatible with merit. By building into recognitions/ awards/scholarships and even evaluation processes, the principle of acknowledging the efforts and merits of "those who have travelled the farthest" in their individual learning curves, AUD would go a long way in deconstructing received or constraining notions of 'success' or 'failure'[26].

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[26] Like for example the use of a 'deprivation' index as an admission policy template (developed in some universities like JNU) opened up opportunities to a much wider cross-section of disadvantaged youth; similar articulations and efforts are yet to find expression in a standardized evaluation/assessment system.

AUD sees itself as a transformatory space of discourse and action, with the core guiding philosophy that each student's intrinsic worth and potential can find avenues for inventiveness and articulation. This credo needs to be translated to the everyday rhythms of the UG space, through a range of academic, extra-curricular, outreach and skill/practice-based activities. Asking the question continuously, 'who is at the centre of our pedagogical engagement, as we strive towards newer goals of excellence?' could help steer the UG space in close alignment with the AUD credo.

5.3. Pluralism as the Celebration of Diversity

AUD was envisioned as a genuine example of academic and organiza-

tional pluralism as articulated in its vision statement. Ramachandra Guha has pointed to the fact that the best universities practice **five** kinds of pluralism.1) Offer undergraduate and graduate courses in diverse disciplines. 2) Expose students to different frameworks in each discipline. 3) Attract students of diverse backgrounds. 4) Attract private as well as public funding. 5) Recruit faculty from across the country and diverse social groups.

While AUD has tried to reflect these broad ideas in spirit, implementation at the UG level has had challenges. The enthusiasm for and the coherence of vision about the importance of the UG space that was shared by the founding faculty has perhaps not been effectively transmitted to the newly recruited and diverse group of teachers (with different levels of engagement and differences in tenure).

The AUD community needs to constantly reiterate that the UG space is distinctive, not a watered down or diluted version of PG programmes or an upgraded version of school based transmission. It has to evolve pedagogic practices that require recognition of heterogeneity in a constructivist classroom, open space for eclectic methods including flipped classrooms, blended learning techniques, and above all, build on the multiplicity of voices that seek articulation in an open democratic

space. If faculty perceive UG teaching as somehow a distraction from their research potential, they are unlikely to experiment and innovate to capitalize on diversity. This could lead to academic or discipline-based parochialism and may retard multi/inter disciplinarity.

The Committee recommends a **series of trainings** and consultations, before teachers are "assigned" to UG teaching. The link-between the UG programmes and democratic praxis needs to be foregrounded. Also required is a sensitization programme that invests in responding to social, cultural, linguistic and class diversities of learners experiencing autonomy time and the opportunity to make considered choices for the first time.

5.4. Investing the Undergraduate Space with Agency and Possibility

From being a student-centric University, the UG structure and design is tending to be more accommodative of priorities set by the faculty. The vision for the undergraduate space, as a unique dialogic space, with different schools and disciplinary vantage points cohering to generate a vibrant ecosystem of ideas and processes, seems to have lost steam. There has to be a paradigmatic shift in the way in which the UG space is being imagined and visualised. In less than ten years of establishment of AUD, certain shifts are clearly visible. It appears to the Committee that the Schools are pulling in different directions, with an implicit throwback to disciplinary boundaries and the differences are not being channelized into a coherent perspective on the unique potentialities of this space for **genuine interdisciplinarity.**

The distinctiveness of UG pedagogy needs to be kept in mind at all times. The undergraduate programme at AUD was designed to open the minds of students, rather than filling them with specific facts it sought to engage them in a variety of perspectives thus encouraging them to think creatively.

While course content is primarily a matter for the teacher and programme teams to determine, there is little doubt that what is learnt best is where

the learner is herself a participant rather than mere recipient. Some part of class time could be devoted to creating the course materials; and creating content, researching on the net, under the guidance of the teacher and pooling information and issues that could form the basis for future students to elaborate and refine. This is particularly possible for the humanities and social sciences with their multiple perspectives and variety of sources and even contested data. AUD, with its progressive vision of 'flipped' and constructivist classrooms, is ideally positioned to set new benchmarks in this domain.

The inter-relation between different courses, in the entire undergraduate programme, is a matter that is of utmost importance and must be seriously addressed across disciplines continually. The coding of courses at different levels of difficulties for different years would help reflect the enhanced levels at different stages of the learning trajectory. The problems of determining the level of courses and the semester system could vary across disciplines: different strokes for different folks; and perhaps courses building on each other, leading from one semester to another may be simpler in the case of Mathematics and Economics, but not so clear in History and Sociology. The progressive nature of courses both within programmes and across programmes could be more carefully monitored, perhaps by an academic oversight committee that is involved in not only seeing how courses add up, but also how time tables are constructed. It is here that some care needs to be taken in offering electives to students in different programmes. Progressive difficulty must not simply be assumed, but spelt out, and this could be done by noting the length as well as the difficulty of specified readings. Impetus for creative pedagogy and curriculum can emanate from the heterogeneity in competence and learning needs across students.

5.5. Faculty Orientation and Preparation for UG Pedagogy

The Committee feels that it is critical for the undergraduate space that faculty members are able to integrate the question of social justice in their approach to the heterogeneous classroom, student diversity, and

pedagogy. Further, it should be ensured that the new/existing faculty recruited is in alignment with AUD's mission statement of bridging equity with excellence. AUD could develop a series of workshops for orienting and supporting faculty for UG teaching, and in time become a **training centre on innovative UG pedagogy.** The School of Education could consider this as an important aspect of its mandate.

5.6. Students

Conversations with students as well as different faculty groups responsible for the BA teaching indicate that in recent years the difficulties in the implementation of the UG programmes have been sidelined, given the faculty's primary/preferential engagement with their parent School and associated PG programme. Undergraduate students feel marginalized within the University space at multiple levels.

Access to Spaces, Resources and Library: a.) undergraduate students do not have spaces for creative activity. Their timetable reflects that the academic requirements and structural aspects of the UG programme are at variance with each other. Negotiation over space/structure and the timetable have not focused enough on student need or convenience. b.) The library and other spaces in the University are not conducive to the needs of the undergraduate students; while PG students still had dedicated classrooms, the "undergraduate students had corridoors". The structure/space planning does not seem student sensitive enough. The structure of the first year **orientation programme** needs careful review and extensive planning to make it meaningful. Students' experience of accessing various resources like the library for instance point to serious gaps in the orientation, **which is a crucial rite of passage from school to university.** Instead of offering an orientation in one big batch, hands-on workshops with different and smaller batches; for every combination at UG level, would prove more useful. This could include hands-on training on accessing library resources and/or 1 or 2 credit hands-on basic and advanced study skills courses offered across the first two semesters for all UG students.

Academic Advising needs to be strengthened to guide and help structure progression trajectory with the apposite combination of courses. With around 60 or so electives (from the different schools that 'service' the UG Programme) and a number of Foundation Optional courses (to choose any one from), the freshman batch confronts a smorgasbord of undecipherable choices. This cafeteria approach can work optimally in the AUD context only if supported by active **academic advising and mentoring at every stage of the students' progression.**

Again, courses need to be coded and communicated as at ascending levels of difficulty, so that the student choices in each semester reflect a **scaling up** of the learnings from the previous semester. The tendency to treat most courses at approximately similar levels of difficulty may prove detrimental to progressive learning, academic acumen and intellectual growth. Academic advising would also effectively intervene to assess and help students to structure their programme with full awareness of their individual competency levels and also their potential for engagement with specific disciplines.

Student centric education is commendable, but it can never be visualized as sending the student adrift and unanchored to explore an uncharted sea. **Content-structure** balance with the ability to devise appropriate and functionally fulfilling route-maps for students with active one-on-one advising and mentoring, will determine the success of the UG programme. It requires hard work and a dedicated faculty cohort that can take ownership of the programme and represent the assurance of continuity and hand-holding for students perplexed by the often bewildering choices and individual autonomy that characterize the 'new' learning ecosystem of AUD.

Academic advising can take several forms, but is primarily intended to help students make informed decisions about their major exploration, academic policies and procedures. Academic advisors assist students in identifying additional support services that can help them achieve academic success. Students could be helped with:

- Course selection

- Academic planning

- Changing major, minor, interdisciplinary and co-curricular study options

- Withdrawal from a subject

- Course audit when possible

- Liaising with faculty members

Once admitted to AUD, students could be assigned a faculty member to act as a Major Advisor. The Major Advisor could be assigned to students on the basis of their stated academic preferences at the time of admission. The group that is **most in need of such sustained guidance and advising is the Social Science and Humanities (Honours) cohort.** Being "divided" between three disciplines they are shorn of the protective umbrella of a School or a coherent programme team.

5.7. Faculty Mentors

Students may also be assigned a faculty mentor. Faculty mentors could meet with groups of students at a time to discuss matters relating to students' general experiences at the University. Academic Advisors and Faculty Mentors make themselves available to speak with students during posted office hours about how best to prepare for, and navigate, the student's preferred Major programme. The Academic Advisor could meet with students once a semester, during the assigned Pre-Registration Advising weeks, to discuss possible course selections for the following semesters. The onus must be placed squarely **on students to keep in touch for appointments–preferably by email –with the Faculty Advisor during posted office hours.** The idea is not to infantilize the student but open up constructive opportunities for agency and initiative.

5.8. Foundations – Revisited

As a Liberal Arts and Humanities University, AUD provides a compelling counter narrative or antidote to the narrow "scientism", compulsive quantitative emphases and new managerialism that threaten to shrink the expansive universes of learning on HEI campuses today. AUD emphasizes critical thinking and an integrative approach as foundational to the learning experience. **Foundation Courses (FC),** cutting across conventional disciplinary sites, epistemic hierarchies between Mathematics, the Sciences and Humanities are intended to provide perspectives on the connections between epistemic structures and social structures, open up canvases of learning to **explore the interconnections between Seeing, Being, and Doing.** They are intended to provide the spine for the UG learning experience.

In the implementation however, a large part of this 'non-transactional' vision seems to have diluted. Of the four FCs that every UG student is required to do, three are mandatorily fixed with English, Hindi, and Environmental Studies. The fourth can be chosen from among a range of elective Foundation Courses, a mix of innovatively and traditionally transacted engagements. These Foundation Courses (FCs) provide an eclectic range, of which a student gets to study only one. Timetabling issues and faculty availability further reduce the scope of choice, with a large number of short term and contract faculty assigned to teach core Foundation Courses.

What has ended up happening is that there has unwittingly been a conflation, over the years, between ancillary (competency building components) and the perspective-enhancing components, with the latter taking something of a back seat. Keeping all courses at 4 credits had also perhaps, had a deleterious impact on the Foundation Courses, taking away substantive options meant to enrich exposure and acumen.

The Committee recommends a serious revisit of the structuring of FCs. Examples could be drawn from the positive experiences of some trend setting universities like the Ashoka University, in the delivery and design

of FCs within the UG structure. The number of Foundation Courses could be increased and more compulsory Foundation Courses in Critical Thinking and Quantitative Reasoning, Ethical Reasoning, Literature and Arts etc., could be added. These need not be introductions or gateways to particular disciplines but rather "as different ways of engaging with the world". The structure and delivery of Foundation Courses at Ashoka University are at Annexure E. This could provide inputs on how the FCs could be revisited. What is clear is that the best faculty at the University needs to be incentivized to teach these courses, and that the foundational courses could be spread out till at least the 5th semester to provide complementarity and "breathe" broad perspectives while simultaneously pursuing Discipline Majors. Also, these should not be 'set in stone' but have a regular turnover of courses and content.

In addition to providing students with greater representation and voice in decision-making processes, their autonomy in designing extra-curricular activities, outreach programmes, accessing spaces for collaborative activity within the University, needs empathetic and speedy response. The needs and expectations of the University from UG students admitted under the extra-curricular quota have yet to find clear articulation.

Additionally, for students with genuine potential but inadequacies with language and communication skills, writing tutors (PhD students/ Senior PG students/ Teaching Assistants) from the School of Letters and Centre for English Language Education (CELE), could provide support for FCs and Electives and offer students assistance with their writing through more group workshops or individual appointments to buttress English proficiency.

Students' demand for professional counselling, particularly with regard to differentiating the chosen trajectories particularly for those for whom the BA is the terminal degree and those who wish to transition into higher educational degrees, is crucial. AUD may also pay particular attention to why such a small number of its own UG cohort, manage

to clear the PG admission criteria within the same university. **This is a gap that needs serious attention.** Along with a longer orientation programme, the Committee recommends a Bridge Course for those who need extra support in language, Mathematics and soft skills. The latter could be between the 4th and 5th semester or at the end of the sixth semester. There is also need to acquire more background reading material in Hindi and develop such material within the University.

For a university that is mandated to service the needs of the NCT, the paucity of courses on Delhi – its rich history, challenges of migration, urbanization, public health, environment, its location as an emerging business megalopolis, urban design, art, architecture, development challenges and opportunities, its role in contemporary geopolitics and so on-is particularly startling. AUD has a real opportunity – to spearhead and pioneer cutting edge study and research on Delhi, and indeed establish a **unique Centre around issues germane to the National Capital Territory.** This will facilitate attracting engaged scholars both from India and abroad to this hub.

UG students must have access to the best faculty on campus. Senior professors teaching Foundation Courses assisted by a young scholar or Teaching Assistant is the best option – but there are other workable alternatives that need to be explored. A mechanism for involving research students as Teaching Assistants to senior (but overstretched) faculty needs to be evolved. The dependence on Adjunct faculty needs to be reduced. The two hour class needs to be revisited. The feedback from faculty is that it is too long and neither optimal nor effective – given shorter attention spans.

There is clearly a need to invest in a technology platform to support the work of faculty and academic administrators to better support students. The experience of cutting edge institutions with Learning Management System to augment the current ERP, for managing evaluation and academic progression, needs to be seriously explored. The importance of a blended learning approach cannot be over emphasized. The

MOOCs that are being generated worldwide are under the scanner and of questionable value in substituting conventional teaching especially in the context of inclusion and access priorities.

As HEIs confront the trilemma of scale, cost and quality on account of the demographic education bulge, issues of governance and legitimacy cannot be overcome by ceding space to political and/ market interventions. Neither does the answer lie in simply replicating the Western brick and mortar approach to the institutional infrastructure of universities. India's rapid economic growth and integration into the global economy with around 42 million people seeking to enter the job market every year, has raised the demand for people with extremely different skill sets from those needed in the1990s. The importance of a **blended** learning approach cannot be overemphasized.

Yet today, the "shelf life" of knowledge is diminishing. It is being argued that, knowledge embodied in a degree could be "outdated" in 5-10 years. Universities seem to be preparing students for futures that cannot even be envisioned today. In the world of Cyber Physical Systems (CPS), digital technologies are impacting/ disrupting all spheres of existence. Blockchain technology enables micro-courses to be delivered at the convenience and pace of the student and this space has yielded "service providers" who completely bypass the concept of the conventional degree. They exist online and use digital technology.

A Social Science and Humanities university like AUD that has a niche significance cannot afford to ignore these developments. The need for a huge influx of faculty (with limited funding sources and finite funding) and multiple campuses will need to more effectively harness appropriate technology for large chunks of content delivery. Creative integration of technology into teaching and learning will build capacity in faculty, better prepare students for the world of work, and qualitatively transform the classroom experience, and enable multiple modes of mediums, expressions and articulations to enter the pedagogic space. The School of Education Studies (SES) could be the hub for such experimentation

and help shape an active and meaningful digital interface for learning and capacity development for university and school teachers. A detailed set of recommendations on the modalities and expected outcomes of such integration prepared by Professor Maina Chawla Singh are appended as Annexure F. These underscore how "inclusion", seen as a continuous process at AUD, will be enhanced through such integration and not create an often feared "digital divide". This will also prove a litmus test for openness to innovation.

The innovative space that AUD seeks to nurture will, in large measure, depend on how it imbues the teaching-learning process with a sensitivity that reconciles excellence, access and equity—a pedagogy that breaks free of rhetoric, breaks myths, and rescues imagination and intuition, using them as resources to conceive and initiate change. The open dialogue that this requires sustains critical thinking and imagination where students and teachers engage with alternatives in anticipating a new social reality. This involves making a discourse of 'ethics' and 'hope' on the one hand, and the ongoing struggle for creating democratic public spheres **in** and **outside** the university, a central focus of education. In its attempt to harmonize the discipline of structure with democratic space; transmit the importance of succeeding without competing; redefining notions of success; creating community; resisting homogenization; celebrating diversity; and nurturing an enlightened humanism that moulds young people (confident of going beyond every glass ceiling even as they interrogate and challenge oppressive structures of caste, class and patriarchy) AUD had set itself on a road less travelled.

In the new unfolding world order, with a more aspirational India, institutions like AUD will be called upon to play a more visibly proactive role to craft new directions of leadership. How AUD reconciles excellence with inclusivity, success with sensitivity and reflexivity, cosmopolitanism **with** the best in the Indian traditions, and engages **with** the new frontiers of knowledge **without** losing sight of the human dimension—will be AUD's greatest challenge, its vital task. Yet, one of the most crucial aspects of a space that creates a community of

learning is that it retains the capacity to subject itself to continuous self-examination and renewal. It maintains its original function to educate for good citizenship but is also innovative in preparing students, who liberally educated, will join the company of men and women throughout the world to address the great issues of their times, make their voice count and make a difference. Such an institution reaches beyond the work of its founders, beyond the span of any single individual and bears the imprint of a transformative collective imagination. AUD retains the potential to be such an institution – perhaps an institution like no other.

Annexures

Annexure A

Details of Committee Meetings

Date	Venue	Agenda
18 January 2018	IIC	Joint Meeting of the Undergraduate Studies Review Committee and Decennial Review Committee
6 February 2018	IIC	Initial brainstorming and consultations with the VC and Dean, SUS
18 February 2018	AUD, Kashmere Gate	Interaction with AUD Alumni
19 February 2018	AUD Kashmere Gate	Interaction with Core Management Team
21 February 2018	AUD, Kashmere Gate	Interaction with Outgoing Student Representatives
24 February 2018	AUD, Lodhi Road	Internal meeting of UGRC to decide the approach and methodology of the review process, finalize ToRs and decide the timeline and next steps for review.
7 March 2018	AUD, Karampura	Meeting with faculty of School of Vocational Studies (SVS) and School of Undergraduate Studies (SUS), as part of DRC meetings with stakeholders
8 March 2018	AUD, Kashmere Gate	(DRC) Meeting with faculty of School of Liberal Studies (SLS), School of Letters (SoL), Center for English Language Education (CELE) and School of Human Studies (SHS)
23 March 2018	AUD, Kashmere Gate	Meeting with Academic Coordination Committee, Programme Teams and UG Students
4 May 2018	AUD, Karampura	Meeting with Faculty and Students of SVS, and the Undergraduate Programme Restructuring Team.
30 May 2018	India International Centre	Meeting with members of the Decennial Review Committee

Annexure B

List of Foundation Courses of SUS

Foundation Courses	Foundation Optional Courses**
• English for Academic Purposes* • English Proficiency Course	• Indian Constitution and Democracy • Youth, Society and Literature • Identity through Popular Narratives • Indian Society: Continuity, Change and Paradoxes • Introduction to Culture and Creative Expressions • Nature of Science • Hindi Aadhar Pathyakram • Introduction to Drawing • Introduction to Gender • Introduction to Social Sciences and Humanities • Logic and Reasoning
• Vyavaharik Hindi Bhasha • Madhyamik Hindi Bhasha • Aarambhik Hindi Bhasha (Students have to take any one out of these three courses)	
• Environment: Issues and Challenges	

*Compulsory

**Students have to complete at least one course from the Foundation Optional basket

Annexure C

List of Electives Offered at SUS

Economics	
1.	Introduction to Indian Economy
2.	Public Economics
3.	Topics in Economic Theory
4.	Indian Economic History
5.	Money, Banking and Finance

Mathematics	
1.	Mathematical Modelling
2.	Partial Differential Equations
3.	Advanced Analysis
4.	Quantitative Methods
5.	Mathematical Finance

Political Science	
1.	Democracy and Development in India
2.	Politics in South Asia
3.	Legal Literacy and Application in India
4.	Political Thought in Contemporary India
5.	Introduction to Politics

Sociology	
1.	Food and Society
2.	The Risk Society
3.	Sociology of Work
4.	Health and Society

History	
1.	Introduction to Society and Culture in East Asia
2.	Understanding the Past
3.	Contemporary India: 1947 - 1992
4.	Caste and Indian Modernity
5.	Introduction to Indian Art and Architecture
6.	Understanding the Past: Myth, Epics, Chronicles & History
7.	Decolonisation in History
8.	Wars and Revolutions

Psychology	
1.	Organizational Behaviour
2.	Psychology in Action
3.	Counselling Psychology

Hindi	
1.	Bhartiya aur Vishv Sahitya
2.	Sahitya Ki Samajh
3.	Hindi Aadhar Pathyakram
4.	Adhunik Sahitya Pravrittiyan aur Andolan
5.	Svadhinata Andolanka Vaicharik Jagat aur Hindi

Non-Discipline Electives	
1.	Digital Storytelling
2.	Understanding Disability through Media
3.	Critical Perspectives on Creative Explorations
4.	Introduction to Human Ecology
5.	Indian History through Literature

List of English Electives Offered

In an academic year, at a time, about 18-20 courses are offered to students out of the list of courses given below.
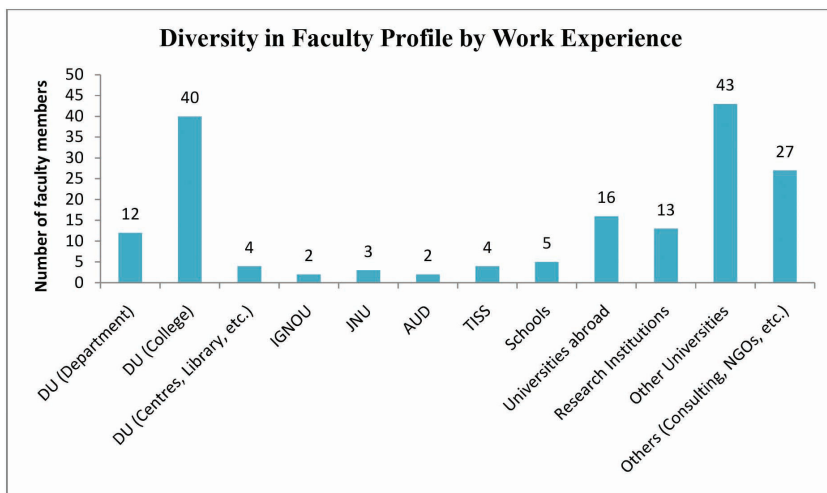
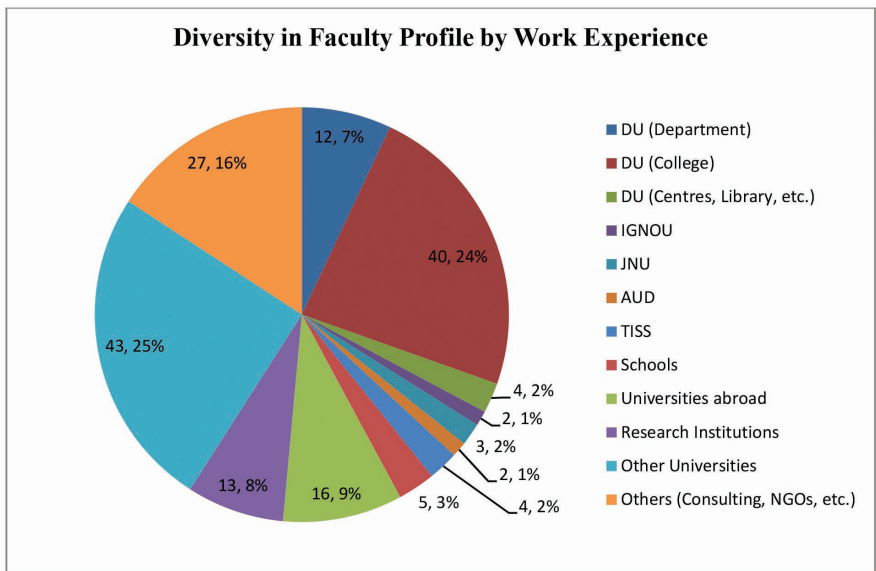|			
1.	Reading Fantasy: JRR Tolkien and CS Lewis	17.	Folk, Oral, Indigenous and Popular Cultures
2.	The Romantic Age	18.	Contemporary Indian Drama
3.	Modern Short Fiction and Novellas	19.	Literatures of the Indian Subcontinent
4.	Study of English Language	20.	Introduction to Dalit writings
5.	Realism and the Novel	21.	Modernism
6.	Shakespeare	22.	Introduction to Literary Theory
7.	Postcolonial Literature	23.	Written for Children and Young Adults
8.	Literature of Renaissance	24.	Modern World Drama
9.	Literary Translation: Process, Poetics and Politics	25.	Approaches and Theories of Language Learning
10.	Introduction to Indian and World Literatures	26.	Mahabharata and its Modern Renderings in Fiction, Film and Drama
11.	Voices of Dissent: Bhakti Poetry	27.	Modern Short Fiction and Novellas
12.	The Romantic Age	28.	What is World Literature
13.	Reading Autobiography	29.	Tragedy Down the Ages
14.	Literature and Cinema	30.	Comedy: Not Just for Laughs
15.	American Literature	31.	Literatures of the East: India and Arabia
16.	Contemporary Literatures of the North East: Fiction and Poetry		

Annexure D

Faculty Profile

Faculty Data (Place of work prior to joining AUD)

Name/Type of Institution	Number of faculty members
DU (Colleges)	40
DU (Departments)	12
DU (Centres, Library, etc.)	4
IGNOU	2
JNU	3
Research Institutions	13
Other Universities	43
Universities Abroad	16
AUD	2
TISS	4
Schools	5
Others (Consulting firms, NGOs, NPOs, Media conglomerate, Investment banks, etc.)	27
Total	**171**

Diversity in Faculty Profile by Work Experience

**Diversity in Faculty Profile by Work Experience
(Delhi/Outside Delhi)**

5, 3%

61, 36%

105, 61%

- Delhi
- Outside Delhi
- Data not available

Diversity in Faculty Profile by Work Experience

12, 7%

27, 16%

40, 24%

43, 25%

13, 8%

16, 9%

5, 3%

4, 2%

4, 2%

2, 1%

3, 2%

2, 1%

- DU (Department)
- DU (College)
- DU (Centres, Library, etc.)
- IGNOU
- JNU
- AUD
- TISS
- Schools
- Universities abroad
- Research Institutions
- Other Universities
- Others (Consulting, NGOs, etc.)

Education Qualification

Qualification	Number of Faculty
PhD	134
MPhil	21
MA	10
Master in Architecture	1
M.Design	1
PD	1
LLM	2
MBA	1
MFA	2
MSc	1
Total	**174**

Name of University/ Institution	Number of Faculty Members
JNU	54
University of Delhi	38
Universities Abroad	26
IIT	6
EFLU	4
NID	3
Others	43
Total	**174**
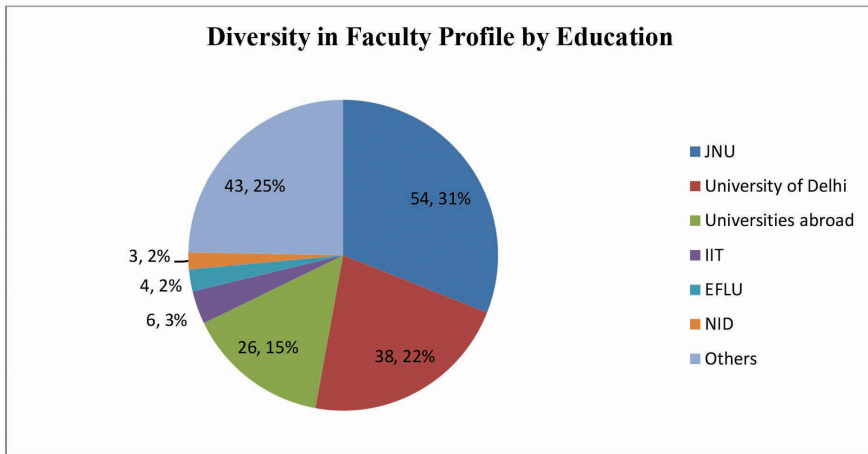
Diversity in Faculty Profile by Education

54, 31% — JNU
38, 22% — University of Delhi
26, 15% — Universities abroad
6, 3% — IIT
4, 2% — EFLU
3, 2% — NID
43, 25% — Others

The pie chart provides the distribution of faculty by the last institution attended for PhD/MPhil/other academic programmes

Diversity in Faculty Profile by Education (Delhi/Outside Delhi)

69 40% — Outside Delhi
105 60% — Delhi
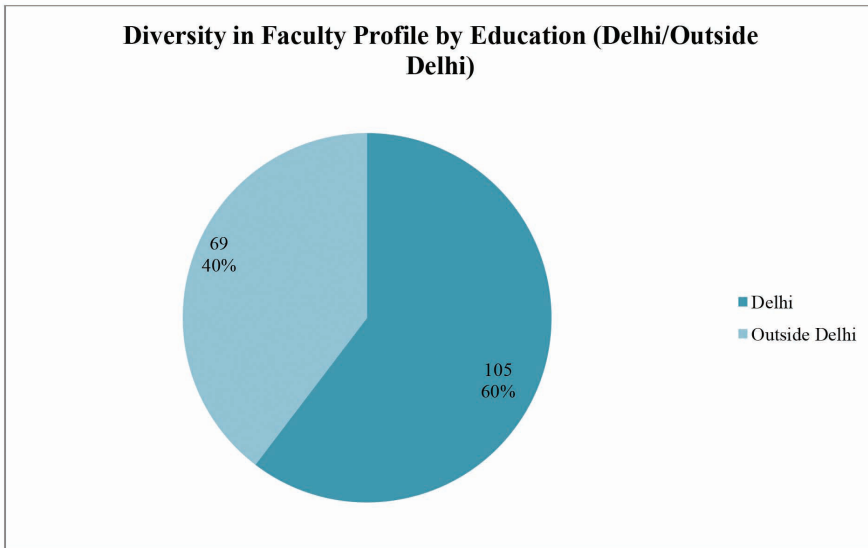
Annexure E

Structure of Foundation Courses at Ashoka University

The structure of foundation courses as designed at Ashoka University: the credit structure, their placement and distribution across the undergraduate programme.

To graduate with a Bachelor's degree from Ashoka University, students must take and pass 9 Foundation Courses (36 credits), at least 12 Major Courses (48 credits), and 2 Co-Curricular Courses (4 credits) within three years. Students can take 3 other elective courses in any programme including their Major programme.

Foundation Courses

Introduction to Critical Thinking CT -1

Critical Thinking Seminar: CT 2- in a subject area

Great Books - FC

Indian Civilizations -FC

Mathematical Thinking & Quantitative Reasoning (New Name of this course)

Literature and the World -FC

Mind and Behaviour -FC

Principles of Science - FC

Social and Political Formations – FC

Introduction to Environmental Studies (UGC – mandatory course added to the FC list in 2017)

Foundations of Economic Reasoning - FC (Removed from the FC list after 2017)

Trends in History – FC (Removed from the FC list after 2017)

In the very first semester after joining all first-year students at Ashoka University take only foundation courses (not counting a co-curricular course). These include 1 Critical Thinking Seminar course called CT-001, which is an Introduction to Critical Thinking and three other Foundation Courses from those listed above.

It is recommended that students take a Foundation Course linked to their likely Major but it is not required: Literature and the World (English), Trends in History (History), Mind and Behaviour (Philosophy or Psychology), Social and Political Formations (Political Science or Sociology/Anthropology). Likely Economics Majors MUST take Foundations of Economic Reasoning; likely Mathematics and Computer Science Majors MUST take Introduction to Mathematical Thinking.

In their second semester students take one Critical Thinking Seminar called CT-2 and one other foundation course and start taking courses in their likely Major subject. Students are advised to typically take 4 courses but not more than 5. The requirements for Economics, Mathematics and Computer Science majors are different based on the requirements of the major as determined by the department.

The CT-2 course is offered in subject areas and in large numbers so that all students can get a course. There is a cap of 18-20 students per course and hence a large number of this course is offered. The intention in this course is to stress the critical reading but more importantly writing in a subject matter disciple. (In the first 2 years there was also a CT-3 that students had to do but that has since been dropped.)

As they progress students take more courses in the student's declared Major, adding a Foundation course as and when possible to complete the entire required courses. The fifth optional course would be either in the student's anticipated Minor or an Elective.

After two years when the Environment Studies course became a mandatory course as well as based on student feedback Ashoka University made a change in the Foundation course requirements.

Ashoka University requires each student to take seven out of its nine Foundation Courses plus the two Critical thinking seminars. Of these Mathematical Thinking & Quantitative Reasoning, and Introduction to Environmental Studies are mandatory. These courses are not formal gateways into the Major programmes.

There is no specific order in which Foundation Courses need to be taken. Apart from Introduction to Critical Thinking Seminar (first semester) and the Critical Thinking Seminar (second semesters), students can take the other seven Foundation Courses whenever they want.

However, it is recommended that they take the Foundation Courses in the subject that they are considering as their major prior to declaring their major.

The seminars, capped at a smaller number than other Foundation Courses, are designed to help students develop critical skills in reading, writing, analysis and interpretation within the parameters of a specific subject. A CTS seminar can also count towards the Major and Minor requirements; based on the specific department.

In the 4 weekly hours of classroom meetings for Foundation Courses, 3 hours are spent in lecture classes (usually 2 meetings of one and a half hours each), and 1 hour is spent in discussion sections; the Foundation Courses are taught by at least one faculty member. The one-hour discussion section is a tutorial led by the teaching assistant.

Discussion Sections

Discussion Sections are course meetings of one hour's duration led by a Teaching Fellow/Teaching Assistant. Students must attend 1 Discussion Section a week for each Foundation Course they are taking. The Discussion Sections are much smaller in size than the Lecture Classes; normally each Foundation Course will subdivide into six Discussion Sections. The objective is to make sure students have ample opportunity to talk about the ideas of the course in a

peer-learning-oriented environment. The Teaching Fellow may answer questions about the course materials, but s/he is there less to "lecture" than to facilitate dialogue and debate. Some meetings of Discussion Sections will consist of extra course readings as well as in-class writing assignments that will serve as the basis of discussion.

The philosophy guiding the conceptualization and execution of the foundation courses: the nature of these courses, their objectives, and scope

Foundation courses at Ashoka University were envisioned to be mandatory courses that all undergraduates take during their BA/ BSc programme. They are seen as an essential part of the liberal arts and science experience.

These were conceived to add a layer of exposure and balancing out the narrow focus in the Indian secondary school education.

The rubric in designing these courses is to further:

Forms of Inquiry

Quantitative Reasoning

Ethical Reasoning

Formal Reasoning

Scientific Method and Analysis

Social Inquiry

Ways of thinking

Literature and the Arts

These courses may not be owned by any one department or discipline but can have shared ownership as the context in designing the course

content is to "elaborate the range of ways of engaging with the human and the natural world known to us."

These are taught by the senior-most faculty at Ashoka University thereby giving a fair chance to students who are admitted to the University to have the opportunity to take classes with academic stalwarts even if they will not major in that disciple.

Annexure F

Integration of Technology into Teaching and Learning

Rationale:

IT integration in teaching and learning is important in order to prepare students for an ever-advancing technologically enabled workplace. While AUD students may be already familiar with digital modes for interpersonal communication and social media for peer-group interactions, integrating technology into university teaching can become a means of imparting powerful skills for the workplace. Over the undergraduate years, students who become accustomed to receiving, processing and uploading serious academic content for assessment will acquire a skill-set which is key to being job-ready today. The suggestions in this section are based on observations and interactions at various AUD campuses including Kashmere Gate, Karampura and Lodhi Road, as well as discussions of the review committee held since January 2018.

During Review Committee meeting at Karampura campus, the students of SVS Karampura articulated the need for more enhanced IT training. Thus, students of 3 B.Voc programmes in Tourism and Hospitality, Retail Management, and Early Childhood Centre Management and Entrepreneurship (ECCME) would benefit greatly if their IT skills could be enhanced.

Additionally, some issues related to UG teaching including the heterogeneity among the student body at AUD, and the varying levels of proficiency in English may pose challenges to teaching concepts and theories in social sciences. These are some areas in which digital-integration into pedagogy may facilitate content delivery and how 'on-demand' content could enhance learning outcomes and retention of course material. At one of the review committee meetings it was suggested that UG space "could actually become a laboratory for pedagogical innovation for achieving social justice given the diversity

that AUD reckons within the UG classroom". Also, in this context, it can be suggested that creative pedagogy and curriculum can emanate from this heterogeneity within the student body. Better integration of digital platforms among students and faculty can further these processes.

The recommendations below are mindful that this digital-integration would not entail large purchases of equipment etc., by the university. Instead, the emphasis is on training faculty and students to be conversant with digital practices in teaching and learning so that they may avail of easily available services on the internet or free software. It is envisaged that with extensive training over time, the campus community would begin to interact in an eco-system where students, teachers and staff use digital pathways to deliver and receive content, study materials, and perform assessment-related tasks towards creating a paper-less process which would minimize the need for hard copies, Xeroxes etc., and promote more simplified and ecofriendly teaching and learning systems.

The aim of these initiatives should go beyond digital literacy because many students from the NCR region may already be possessing basic digital skills. We should aim at DIGITAL LEARNING (DL) This would mean:

- integrating digital modes into communications with students

- creating virtual spaces for students to respond on multiple platforms- text, voice and video

- training students to use digital spaces using appropriate language and safety protocols.

How would this work across disciplines?

As with the introduction of any new mode of sharing content, integrating Digital Learning (DL) would work differently in different disciplinary spaces.

Example: DL may be especially helpful in addressing Language-Proficiency Issues to maximize teaching and learning outcomes.

At various meetings, there were repeated references to the English language proficiency and communication skills which vary widely among the AUD student body. Faculty expressed difficulties in handling these varying levels of language proficiency in their teaching. Students also mentioned some voluntary efforts whereby students were offering support to others who needed English language enhancement.

In this regard, technology may provide a solution coupled with innovation in the delivery of content. For example, faculty could record short modules addressing the most common issues in language proficiency and these could be uploaded online, either on a dedicated YouTube channel meant for AUD students or they could be made available by providing a link to a student as required. This would provide flexibility for student-learning and could potentially become an 'on-demand' mode for teaching language-related modules which are commonly required by students. The video could also provide for a facility for students to post a question which could then be addressed during office hours or online.

This on-demand learning is a powerful mode which has applicability for other subjects as well because professors are often required to teach some basic concepts across several classes and sometimes year after year. If faculty receive training in creating such videos they can self-generate these tools to enhance student-learning of basic concepts prior to meeting in class. Thus, using class time for discussion and analysis would incrementally enhance student learning outcomes.

What this would require:

- An institutional push to make trainings available for students and faculty which include:

a) broad-spectrum consciousness-raising about the potential of digital-integration among faculty and students;

b) Scheduling trainings over a sustained period of time so that individuals may turn their basic comfort-level with electronic platforms into powerful modes to enhance productivity as professionals.

Faculty Trainings should demonstrate how to:

- make available basic course-related concepts and professor-created materials on digital platforms which students may access on flexi-time (Hybrid Courses /Asynchronous Learning).

- maximize classroom interactions to critique rather than 'cover' the syllabus (Flipped Classrooms).

- re-design assignments/tests which may be done off-site and submitted online in a specially designed virtual space, using appropriate software.

- learn software and free applications. which are time-savers in student assessment, editing research papers, and building scholarly bibliographies.

- Learn to make course-related video-clips for 'on-demand' learning.

Outcomes:

For students:

- Students will be familiarised with using technology for academic purposes and understand the use of software for professional purposes, instead of purely social communication. This would be an important skill-set to become job-ready.

- Students will develop a comfort-level to become less dependent on printing/Xeroxing and hard copy submissions.

- Accessing content digitally instead of remaining dependent on 'class-notes' would teach students responsible time-management and the skills of 'flexi-time' learning which are critical components of the 21st century work place.

For faculty:

The benefits for professional development for faculty:

- They would become conversant with more time-saving strategies to deliver content which would be available to students regardless of their physical presence in class.

- As faculty acquire skills to prepare short on-demand modules and videos, there will be great possibilities of making more online content available institutionally

- Faculty comfort with technology will reduce the burden on IT-departments.

- With increased comfort-level with digital platforms, faculty would find new ways to increase their productivity as researchers and writers.

- Reducing paper-submissions etc. would achieve an important ecological goal

It may be suggested therefore, that students and faculty who are comfortable with optimizing the potential in their laptops and smart phones when available, will be able to teach/learn in an environment which would reduce the pressure on time and space while simultaneously teaching students better time-management and responsibility to

review online study materials posted on digital platforms. This would simultaneously free up classroom interactions for more critical discussion-time.

Conclusion:

In suggesting trainings as a way forward, another underlying premise is that campus-wide initiatives to enhance digital skills would reduce the dependence on IT departments and minimize the personnel required, who could then concentrate on network-related and hardware issues rather than need to assist in troubleshooting of simple tasks in the classroom when AV equipment may be used.

Having discussed IT-integration as providing multiple ways to maximize the use of time, space and teacher energy, it is important also to add that technology in itself is only a mode and a broad-spectrum tool, the key to successful learning outcomes lies in competence to handle tech-tools and use them creatively to enhance student-centric learning.

Notes

Notes

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