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Professor Dr. M. P. Singh

Vice Chancellor

Date: July 4, 2009

Dear Students

I warmly welcome you all to the new academic year. I hope that we all will work harder in this new academic year to take NUJS to new heights.

From this new academic year we have made some changes in teaching and evaluation pattern. The purpose of this letter is to effectively and cogently communicate the rationale and the merits behind these changes to all the students. We hope that the new changes are a new experiment in the field of legal education and we need the support and cooperation of you all for its success. These changes have been made after intensive and long brainstorming amongst the faculty members. I have also been discussing these changes, informally, with your representatives.

One important change that we have introduced is that we have reduced the number of classes of a compulsory course from five to four in a week although we have increased the duration of the classes from 50 minutes to one hour. The purpose and objective behind this move is to have less but more intensive and rigorous classes without compromising on the total teaching time. With four classes in a week instead of five, there will be more time for students and faculties to prepare better for the classes in a week. Further, the increase in the duration of the classes has been done with the objective that there is more time available for in-depth discussion and teaching on a particular topic dealt with in the class.

It has been seen that generally optional courses are not taken as seriously as they should be and therefore we have decided to increase the total teaching time of an optional course from 150 minutes in a week to 180 minutes in a week. This will also bridge the huge gap that has always existed between the total teaching time for a compulsory course and an optional course. It is important for all of you to note that both compulsory and optional courses are of three credits each and hence should be treated with same seriousness by everybody.

Last semester, we had done away with the system of awarding marks for attending classes. One of the important reasons for doing this was to stop the institutionalization of all kinds of corrupt practices where false medical certificates were being furnished to make up for not attending classes. No one should be rewarded for mere physical presence in the class. Furthermore, instead of creating a negative allurements of allotting free marks to attend classes we wish to create an academic culture where students feel motivated enough to attend all the classes. This semester we have increased the minimum eligibility to write the end semester examination to attending at least 75 % classes with the exception for those who will represent the university in various



competitions. Also, we are introducing marks for class participation (from second year onwards) so as to reward those hard working students who prepare for their classes on a regular basis and give an incentive to everyone else to prepare for their classes in a regular fashion. At the moment, the introduction of marks for class participation is at the discretion of individual faculties for their courses. However, I strongly feel that having marks for class participation will create the right kind of incentive for students to attend all classes and study regularly.

One of the complaints that I have often heard from many hard working and diligent students is about the projects. The complaint has been that since we are expected to write five original papers in a span of two months time, we are not able to do full justice to our projects. We have completely revamped the system of projects from this semester. Instead of focusing on the quantitative aspect of projects, from this semester the focus will be on the quality of writing. I don't think it is plausible for a student to write five projects of 5000 words each in one semester especially when these projects are preceded by a 1000 words rough draft.

In order to cope up with the pressure of doing so many projects, many of you end up doing a cut and paste job and are not able to focus or do the kind of research that is needed for the projects. Further, it has also been found that due to the pressure of so many projects many of you miss classes or don't take them seriously. This, in turn, creates a culture and a mindset where classroom teaching is given low priority.

Therefore, from this semester we have reduced the number of projects in compulsory courses. This will give you more time to do more intensive research for the lesser number of projects and hence bring about a huge qualitative change in the entire project system. The purpose is to focus on the quality of writing. One well-researched and well-written piece is much better than writing five projects of bad quality. However, we continue with a mandatory project writing in optional courses. This also has the advantage of creating a system where the senior batches do more amount of writing work vis-à-vis someone studying in the first or the second year. It is useful to induct the first and second years smoothly, into the process of legal writing, as against the present system where everyone, whether in fifth year or first year, does the same amount of writing work. Furthermore, since the teachers will have fewer projects to evaluate, they will be able to do a more quality evaluation of a project, which in turn will bring about a qualitative improvement.



Most importantly we have introduced a tutorial system for the first year students in place of the project system. Each tutorial will comprise of writing an essay of 1000 words and then having a discussion on this in a small group of 20 students each. This will provide a platform to the new students to discuss their ideas and debate amongst themselves. Each group will have a tutor – selected from fifth year. So this exercise will also provide a unique opportunity to the students of the senior most batch to engage in tutoring. There will be two tutorials in each subject. The tutorial system will prepare the students for project writing when they go to senior classes. It will also raise the level of engagement of a student with a particular subject.

Another important objective of this entire exercise is also to free some of the time of faculties so that they could engage in more meaningful research and publish their research in credible journals and undertake credible research projects along with their regular teaching duties. One of the most important prerequisites of good teaching is good research and it is important that faculties have time to do research along with teaching. A university is not a place which just consumes knowledge produced elsewhere but should be a place which also generates new knowledge. I would like my faculty and my students to have the time to think about new ideas and generate new knowledge. Also, lesser evaluation load on the faculties will give them with more time to prepare for classes and do a better job in the classroom.

The detailed examination rules will soon be uploaded on the website and you all can see these rules. However, I wanted to write to you all so that I could explain the reasons why we have made these changes. I hope that with these changes we will be able to take a step towards creating a better academic and research environment in the university.

I would conclude this letter by saying that how better a system works entirely depends on the people working in that system and no system or experiment can work unless or until people working in that system show utmost commitment and honesty.

I wish that we make a new beginning in the era of this university and work towards creating an institution that all of us will be proud of.

Yours sincerely

Professor Dr. M P Singh