

# **Higher Education Policy Summary of Recommendations**

- 1. Management of Universities and Resource Provision**
  - 1.1 Planning for University Education**
    - 1.1.1 The UGC will draw up a strategic plan for the Development of University Education based on the National Education Policy.
    - 1.1.2 The academic and institutional planning function should be more purposefully carried out by the individual institutions in conformity with their mission and institutional goals as stated by the UGC.
    - 1.1.3 There will be Planning Cells in each institution linked to the UGC.
  - 1.2 Expansion of University Education**
    - 1.2.1 Increase the present number of universities from 12 to 14 by establishing two more universities in each of the provinces Wayamba and Uva.
    - 1.2.2 Increase the annual intake of students to 15, 000 from the present 10,000 in a phased out manner.
    - 1.2.3 Promote the expansion of advanced technical education, technological education, vocational training and professional education so as to increase opportunities for tertiary education.
  - 1.3 Provision of Alternatives to University Education**
    - 1.3.1 Alternative paths should be provided for those who fail to enter the universities to study further by establishing technical institute and professional colleges.
    - 1.3.2 Professional organizations should be encouraged to strengthen and expand their present programmes for professional education.
    - 1.3.3 Universities should have links with tertiary-level institutes to improve the quality of tertiary-level programmes and also provide a few places for promising students to follow academic degree programmes.
    - 1.3.4 The external degree programmes of universities should be strengthened to provide opportunities for persons to obtain degree qualifications.
    - 1.3.5 Employed persons should not be allowed as internal students but be given alternative of enrolment in the Open University or being candidates for external degrees.
    - 1.3.6 There should be a scheme of affording leave for a specified duration to undergraduates for stints of employment or work experience.

## **1.4 Finance and Resources**

- 1.4.1 Government allocation to Higher Education should be increased from 0.4% of GDP to at least 0.6% GDP by the year 2001.
- 1.4.2 Each university should set up a business office to generate funds through charges for postgraduate and extension courses, consultancy fees, rentals, donations from alumni, endowments, etc.
- 1.4.3 Universities should be allowed to retain the funds they generate through their own efforts and to utilize such funds.
- 1.4.4 Universities should affect economics through improved procedures and better management practices.
- 1.4.5 Allocation to universities should be done on a transparent basis and in a manner that provides incentives for improved performance. A data base might be developed and a set of indicators identified to assist not only for resource allocation but also to assist the planning process.
- 1.4.6 In order to improve the utilization of capital grants, arrangements should be made to have the planning aspects and pre-tender procedures completed well ahead. Meanwhile the UGC should allow an advance allocation for preliminary start up work.

## **1.5 Accountability and Quality Assurance**

- 1.5.1 There should be an academic review carried out by the staff of each faculty annually as a self evaluation exercise.
- 1.5.2 A periodic review should be carried out by a team of academics including peers from other universities to ascertain the level of quality of academic performance and out put of research and other services carried out by the institution.
- 1.5.3 A quality Assurance and Accreditation Board should be established as an independent body under an amendment of the Universities Act to facilitate the establishment and maintenance of quality standards.
- 1.5.4 Procedures for more widespread consultation of staff and students should be introduced.
- 1.5.5 Students activities which contribute to the generating of valid experience and personality development of all students should be supported.

## **1.6 Legal Framework**

- 1.6.1 The Universities Act of 1978 should be revised to enable implementation of the National Policy.
- 1.6.2 The guidance for revision should come a group of persons with the appropriate expertise.

## **2. Admission Policies and Student Welfare**

### **2.1 Admission Policies**

- 2.1.1. The aggregate marks at the GCE Advanced-Level will only be an eligibility requirement. An aptitude test should be held with that Examination for those who seek admission to universities.
- 2.1.2. The aptitude Test should be designed to test the student's potential for academic learning as well as special aptitude for a chosen discipline. The design of this Test (AT) should be the responsibility of the UGC and the Department of examinations.
- 2.1.3. The AT should not place a candidate from any particular locality or community at a relative disadvantage. The media and readily available publications should be used to create public awareness of this programme.
- 2.1.4. A Committee should study how the CBA results and the students participation in extra-curricular activities and project work can be used in the scheme of assessment for admission to universities.
- 2.1.5. The Advanced-Level subject streams should be restructured to provide greater flexibility and novelty in subject combinations; e.g. Economics, Mathematics and Physics.
- 2.1.6. Subject pairs where the content is overlapping may be combined into single subjects, e.g. Buddhism and Buddhist Civilization, Hinduism and Hindu Civilization, and Islam and Islamic Civilization; Botany and Zoology be combined as Biology.
- 2.1.7. Only candidates who qualify in the first or second attempts should be considered for admission to universities.
- 2.1.8. There should be a standardization of marks on a subject basis; but no media-wise standardization.
- 2.1.9. Admission to universities should be on merit as well as special quotas for less developed schools.
- 2.1.10. The merit quota should be progressively increased from the present quota of 40%.
- 2.1.11. The less developed schools and the areas in which they are particularly disadvantages should be identified. The criteria to be sued in classifying schools should be identified through a detailed study.
- 2.1.12. The performance should be reviewed every two years with the intention of increasing the merit quota progressively to 100% by the year 2001.
- 2.1.13. The cut-off aggregate mark should be 50% of the total marks for the candidate's particular subject combination.
- 2.1.14. The MEHE should implement a systemic plan to develop school with priority given to the most disadvantage, and also provide at

least one fully equipped Type 1AB school in each A.G.A. Division by the year 2001.

2.1.15. conditional ties must be introduced through regulations etc. to prevent the creation of any back-log in the future.

## **2.2 Induction of Students.**

2.2.1. A planned induction course will be held at least for a period of six months for students awaiting admission to universities.

- i. Communication skills with special emphasis on English and the use of the spoken word.
- ii. Personality development and social skills
- iii. Guidance on University Education and necessary adaptation.

2.2.2. A guide book like 'Jenning's "A Student's guide to University Education"' should be published to meet today's needs. This book will be available in Sinhala, Tamil and English.

2.2.3. Personality development programmes should be incorporate into school education. Students should be exposed to appropriate motivation and training that would help develop their personality and leadership qualities.

## **2.3 Counseling, welfare and Career Guidance**

2.3.1 A separate unit should be established in each university for counseling-guidance and welfare of students, under a senior academic linked to a central co-ordination unit at UGC.

2.3.2 It is desirable to appoint a teacher as the counselor of a student, but if a suitable teacher cannot be found, then ready access to a professional cadre of trained counselors should be available.

2.3.3 The counseling unit should try to get the assistance of NGOs to help students with problems.

2.3.4 The career guidance section of the counseling unit in each university with co-ordination by the UGC should collect information and data on available job opportunities and guide the students in the selection of courses related to employment prospects. These units should work in liaison with the Human Resource Development council and the National Development Council and Employer's Organization in the country, to obtain valid and timely labour provide employment-career information and advise.

2.3.5 Universities should employ undergraduates on part-time employment for seasonal work in the library, offices, research

- projects, etc. and also in organizations in the locality which will provide students opportunities to earn extra pocket money.
- 2.3.6 There should be a welfare fund with more resources than the Vice-Chancellors funds to help the students in indigent circumstances to meet unexpected exigencies.
  - 2.3.7 Undergraduates should be provided with educational counseling and career guidance. Inter-university transfers should be allowed show that best use could be made of specialized facilities in universities.
  - 2.3.8 Welfare facilities such as canteens, common resources etc. should be upgrade, and be made uniform across all universities. Providing self catering facilities in halls of residence will be useful for students to have a heap nutritious meal.
  - 2.3.9 A university super market can provide provisions a cost to students and the university community
  - 2.3.10 Extra curricular activities should be promoted and regular, organized activities in sports, cultural and social projects will keep students engaged in socially desirable activities.
  - 2.3.11 Qualified persons should be appointed to the post of Director Physical Education and there should be a band of capable coaches to train students in different games.

### **3. Staff Development and Welfare**

#### **3.1. Recruitment and Postgraduate Studies**

- 3.1.1. Procedures for recruitment should be clearly laid down and the best graduates passing out of the universities should be recruited to the staff. Terms and conditions of employment should be so as to attract the best available talent.
- 3.1.2. Facilities should be made available at the Faculties for the university academic staff to obtain their degrees within eight years of recruitment.
- 3.1.3. Opportunities should be afforded for split degree programmes in collaboration with foreign universities, especially at Ph.D. level.
- 3.1.4. Exchange programmes should e arranged for senior academic staff with foreign universities.
- 3.1.5. Means should be provided for supporting research projects of staff who are granted fully-pay study leave to obtain postgraduate qualifications locally.

## **3.2 Andragogical Training and Career Development**

- 3.2.1. University staff should be provided training in pedagogical skills to enhance their teaching capabilities. Every lecturer should undergo a course of training in educational theory and practice relevant to university teaching.
- 3.2.2. At the time of recruitment an orientation should be given to all new lecturers to impart the skills necessary to perform their functions successfully, and these are:
  - i. Communication skills, in particular- improvement of English language proficiency, computing, dealing with media and the public, and management skills.
  - ii. Skills to handle student unrest and professional competencies to help students with problems.
  - iii. New recruits to the profession be nurtured to the social milieu of work values and attitudes.
  - iv. Most activities in universities require teamwork. Persons should be trained formally and informally to work in teams. Staff should be motivated to collaborate in projects and develop a strong team spirit.
- 3.2.3. The involvement of academic staff in National Development and Management Studies will be mutually beneficial. It will provide academics to be aware of current issues and developments and contribute to strengthen national development strategies. Such linkages should be institutionalized as in the Medical educational System.
- 3.2.4. The university academic community should develop a code of ethics for themselves in order to ensure the maintenance of professional standards and accountability to the general public.

## **3.3 Research**

- 3.3.1. More funds should be provided for research in universities. Staff should be provided with facilities to maintain contacts with other agencies involved in research here and abroad.
- 3.3.2. Supply of necessary books, journals and periodicals to the academic staff has to be done regularly.
- 3.3.3. Links should be established with other research institutes in the country so that the available resources can be used to the optimum level.
- 3.3.4. Universities should undertake research for private sector organizations, particularly in industry.

### **3.4 Remuneration and Welfare.**

- 3.4.1. The remuneration of university staff should be at a level that attracts and retains the best academics in the university system.
- 3.4.2. A scheme of promotions based on an objective evaluation of academic programmes, giving weightage to teaching capabilities and research output should be designed and implemented.
- 3.4.3. Welfare facilities such as housing, health insurance, retirement gratuities, pension etc. should be provided.
- 3.4.4. The recruitment and development of support staff in libraries and laboratories etc. should also be the responsibility of the universities.
- 3.4.5. Selection of senior administrative and library staff should be based on more rigorous criteria and they should be given a training in management and for the development of relevant professional competencies.

## **4. Curricula and Assessment**

### **4.1 Reorienting the Curriculum**

- 4.1.1. In a rapidly changing world curriculum designers should consider the necessity for adaptability to changing needs. Graduates of our universities should be able to fit into the needs of the economy.
  - i. produce people who are highly trainable and are quick and effective in the acquisition of knowledge and skills;
  - ii. train a person to be a self-directed learner;
  - iii. build up a person's self-confidence to make him courageous to face new problems, and tackle them resourcefully;
  - iv. provide human resource needs for agriculture, fisheries, tourism, shipping and aviation, international transactions; to service internal requirements banking communications, education, recreation, etc., and to provide maximum value addition to local resources.
  - v. Enable the concepts of 'further education' and 'life long education' in the University curricula through the use of appropriate educational strategies to give effect to these concepts.
- 4.1.2. The present rigid curricula should be made more flexible and for this purpose more amenable systems should be devised. (a) the Open University should tailor make course which match the needs of work places and advantage of information technology to deliver instruction to the point of need; (b) the conventional university should have a mix of distance and residential learning to create a flexible system.

- 4.1.3. A range of skills which are necessary for a professional should be inculcated in the graduate. Examples of such skills are those in communication and information, management, leadership, social skills for interaction with colleagues and employees, use of English, the two national languages and information technology. In addition Sri Lankan studies, health, and ethics and human values should form parts of the core.
- 4.1.4. Integration of practical activities and skills in academic courses will help to develop some of the above essential characteristics. This would be achieved through practical work, field work, project work, assignments, practical training, and internship component in the undergraduate curricular.
- 4.1.5. Small Group work should be organized to promote opportunities for lively discussions, debates and promote thinking skills.
- 4.1.6. Facilities provided through Information Technology should be made available to Universities.
- 4.1.7. The present scheme of assessment based on year-end examination should give way to an integrated scheme of continuous assessment and summative evaluation.
- 4.1.8. The GCE Advance Level curriculum should be revised as stated in the proposals on General Education.
- 4.1.9. Innovations should be introduced on a planned basis with active participation of staff and students.
- 4.1.10. Students who participate in artistic, literary and other creative activities as undergraduates should be given recognition and be rewarded. Formal groups which facilitate such creative activities should be encouraged and supported.

## **4.2 Social Sciences and Humanities Education**

- 4.2.1. Improve/change curricula to provide the quality and up to date education on par with advances in the disciplines. Take steps to:
  - i. widen the scope of knowledge in Social Science disciplines;
  - ii. allow for crossing of traditional disciplinary boundaries and the fusing of Social Sciences and Humanities;
  - iii. do curriculum revision with due regard to the changing character and scope of disciplines-not in a piecemeal fashion.
- 4.2.2. Revise the curricula of the Humanities and Social Sciences courses to match the needs of the expanding private sector especially in the manufacturing, finance, and service sectors. Resolve the conflict that exists between the philosophical and andragogical foundation of university education and the compulsions (imperatives) of the macro-economic realities.



- 4.2.3. Design new courses that add a 'professional training' component to Social Sciences and Humanities Education through the following steps:
  - i. decide at what stage such professional components be introduced;
  - ii. introduce specific courses such as media, social work and counseling, information technology applications, business management, personnel management, administration, advertising and communication while concentrating on main stream subjects;
  - iii. allow for further specialization in the gradate programmes
- 4.2.4. In the first year of an undergraduate career, there should be a number of compulsory or core subjects, along with a range of other subjects for students to choose from, according to their own preferences. The core subjects should be offered by all students, irrespective of their departmental affiliations.
- 4.2.5. In the second and third years, students should follow their 'major' or 'honours' courses. Under this system too, care should be taken to overcome the existing rigidity of disciplinary 'departmentalization'.
- 4.2.6. Students doing Social Sciences and Science also be allowed to do the Management course.
- 4.2.7. The existing system of year-long course work and end of the year examinations should be done away with. A semester system, with mid-term and end-of-semester evaluation schemes can be introduced in place of the present system of course work and evaluation. Independent student projects should be made an integral component of the evaluation system. The semester system should be aimed at creating a flexible structure of undergraduate and graduate course work so that teaching courses are more focused and the teacher given the liberty to introduce new and creative themes in teaching.
- 4.2.8. Review and evaluation of course structures should be done at least every three years, so that periodic upgrading of the course content and quality is ensured.
- 4.2.9. Latest books and periodicals should be provided to the libraries.
- 4.2.10. Full-time graduate teaching should be promote advance learning as well as research.
- 4.2.11. Staff development programmes strengthened to improve the competence of staff to handle new knowledge in their own and allied disciplines.

### **4.3 Science Education**

- 4.3.1. Increase the flexibility of Degree Programmes by allowing the selection of appropriate combinations of disciplines on course units suited to their requirements.
- 4.3.2. Board-base the knowledge of students by inclusion of areas of study outside the science disciplines by inclusion of course units from other faculties such as Management, Legal Studies, Sri Lankan studies.
- 4.3.3. Achieve maximum flexibility by changing the structure of degree programmes to a course unit system. Where this is not possible, permit the selection of one or two disciplines as major and the necessary number of minor subjects from other disciplines.
- 4.3.4. Provide a course in Science Education.
- 4.3.5. Diversify traditional courses to cover applications e.g. applied Physics, analytical Chemistry, Biochemistry and Applied Statistics.
- 4.3.6. Commence inter-disciplinary courses such as Environmental Science, forestry, Biotechnology and Molecular Biology, Materials Science, Medicinal chemistry, Medical physics etc., at undergraduate and post-graduate levels.
- 4.3.7. the Postgraduate Institute of Science should have capability to provide programmes to meet specific needs of the industry.
- 4.3.8. Faculties of Science should continue to have specialized research projects at the highest level.
- 4.3.9. Projections should be made of human resource needs in the Sciences for the next decade.

### **4.4 Engineering and Architectural Education**

- 4.4.1. Engineering graduates have to work in small scale engineering organizations if openings are not available in higher level positions in large organizations. Industrial training in these organizations is useful.
- 4.4.2. Training should enable the engineering graduates to adopt to different specializations after an orientation programme.
- 4.4.3. A strong management component should be integrated into the curriculum of engineering faculties. Opportunities be provided for those desiring to improve their English language skills to attend additional classes.
- 4.4.4. A novel and more responsive internal arrangement of courses is proposed to enable a more effective matching of courses to industry especially where a narrow specialization is required.

#### **4.5 Medical Education**

- 4.5.1. The ongoing curriculum renewal programme be continued for a sufficient period to evaluate its results.
- 4.5.2. Facilities be provided for the medical schools to successfully implement the curricular changes.
- 4.5.3. The staff be motivated to actively carry out the curriculum changes.
- 4.5.4. Develop mechanisms at national level to co-ordinate information support and development, and to encourage co-operation between schools, departments of discipline and other actors in community development.
- 4.5.5. The changes be continuously evaluated over a period of at least five years to determine the impact of such changes to determine whether the desired behavioural changes in the trainees have taken place.

#### **4.6 Dental Science**

- 4.7.1. Although a dental surgeon receives a specialized and technically oriented training it is necessary that they should adapt to the ordinary conditions prevalent in a rural hospital in Sri Lanka.

#### **4.7 Veterinary Medicine**

- 4.7.1. Veterinary Science, Medicine and Surgery should be made more supportive of local animal husbandry activities throughout the country and related industrial activities.
- 4.7.2. changes in the curriculum should be done after a study of the performance of veterinary science graduates in the field and local needs.
- 4.7.3. Veterinary science and practice courses should draw upon local and traditional knowledge and practices so that a more effective system could be evolved.

#### **4.8 Agricultural Science**

- 4.8.1. The curriculum revision programme as undertaken at the Faculty of Agriculture at Peradeniya should be spread to the other faculties of agriculture in a co-ordinated manner.
- 4.8.2. The possibilities in developing new areas in agriculture should be explored and the graduates should be exposed to work in such areas.
- 4.8.3. There should be closer co-operation between agricultural faculties in the universities and the state and private sector organizations engaged in agriculture.