**UNESCO Madanjeet Centre for South Asia Water Management (UMCSAWM), University of Moratuwa**

**Minutes of the Board of Management Meeting held on 06th November 2017**

**at the Board Room, Vice-Chancellor’s Office, University of Moratuwa**

**Meeting Number: UMCSAWM-BoM 06 (2017)**

**Present:**

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| Professor A. K. W. Jayawardane |
| *Vice-Chancellor, University of Moratuwa (UoM)* Chairman |
| Professor N. T. S. Wijesekera  *Chairman of the Centre*  Member |
| Prof. Mrs. Uma Coomaraswamy |
| *SAF Board Member and outside subject expert nominated by the SAF* |
| Prof. K. K. C. K. Perera  *Dean, Faculty of Engineering, UoM* Member |
| Mr. D. L. D. Jayantha |
| *Actg. Registrar, UoM* Member |
| Mr. K. A. D. Pushpakeerthi |
| *Bursar, UoM*  Member |

**Others:**

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| Dr. R. L. H. L Rajapakse |
| *Course Coordinator/Senior Lecturer, UoM*  Observer |

**Apologies:**

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| Madame Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga |
| *Chairperson of SAF-Sri Lanka Chapter*  Co-Chairman |
| Professor J. M. S. J. Bandara |
| *Head, Department of Civil Engineering, UoM* Member |

1. **Agenda Item No. 1: Preliminaries and Welcome by Vice-Chancellor**
   1. Professor A. K. W. Jayawardane chaired the meeting and opened the discussion at 03.30 pm, welcoming board member Prof. Mrs. Uma Coomaraswamy and thanking extended support from SAF-India and SAF-Sri Lanka to continue UMCSAWM activities including its MSc program.
2. **Agenda Item No. 1: Matters arising from the Minutes of the Board of Management Meeting No. 5 (2016)** 
   1. ***Uninformed Departure of SAF Scholars***
      1. Professor N. T. S. Wijesekera reported that the academic activities of the ongoing batch was commenced in May 2017, and SAF-Madanjeet Singh Scholarships were offered to 8 participants (2 from Afghanistan, 2 from Bhutan, 1 from India, 1 from Bangladesh, 1 from Nepal, and 1 from Pakistan).
      2. The Nepali student left the course at the end of the first month due to an offer from another institute. An Afghan student and Pakistani student had returned to their countries (without proper permissions and informing the Centre) at the end of the third month due to personal issues and medical reasons, respectively. The Afghan student came back a week later and the Pakistani student has expressed his interest in resuming classes after medical treatments.
      3. Prof. Wijesekera expressed his concerns as to how the student could re-join the program due to visa issues, missed examinations and assignments and financial constraints.
      4. Prof. Jayawardane requested Prof. Wijesekera to come up with a suitable proposal to address administrative and financial issues. Prof. Perera and Mr. Jayantha added that necessary faculty and senate approvals will have to be obtained for leave or deferment as per the postgraduate course by-laws.
      5. Prof. Jayawardane and Prof. Mrs. Coomaraswamy stressed the need for establishing a system to deal with similar issues and uninformed departure of students.
   2. ***Possibility of Allowing Additional 3-months for Research***
      1. Prof. Wijesekera further commented that since the program cannot attract the best students from the region, program delivery issues have been encountered since 3rd batch and only one SAF scholar has graduated in time. Students are less committed once they return to their countries after submitting only a draft thesis at the end of the one year period and communication difficulties further delay the thesis correction procedures. Since the SAF scholars have registered for the one-year Master’s program, there is no provision to offer them with PG Diploma.
      2. Prof. Wijesekera suggested to allocate additional 3 months entirely for research purposes further referring to the feedback given by both present and past students.
      3. Prof. Coomaraswamy expressed her concerns regarding what assurance is there that the students will commit if additional 3 months are given and also commented that this request will have to be strongly justified academically since SAF allocates funding to all Centres uniformly and any additional provisions may not be approved by the Governing Board.
      4. Prof. Jayawardane and Prof. Perera suggested to submit a strongly justified request to the SAF and recommended to look for other possibilities like checking with the students that if they are willing to stay for additional 3 months on their own expense and offering Department level Research Assistantships/Instructor positions to students staying for extended durations, upon evaluating their progress case by case.
      5. Mr. Jayantha commented that it may be necessary to check the possibility of appointing them as Research Assistants/Instructors according to their visa status.
   3. ***Lack of commitment from students***
      1. Prof. Wijesekera highlighted the lack of commitment from students where delayed submissions and absence from classes have been noted.
      2. Prof. Coomaraswamy proposed to assess the progress of the students during the first three months and take severe actions in case of repeated occurrence of such delays/absenteeism.
   4. ***International/Regional Exchange Staff***
      1. Prof. Wijesekera reported the difficulty in allocating necessary funding for this component as when the entire 8 scholarship positions are filled, a considerable amount of SAF annual fund allocation is utilized for scholarship purposes.
      2. Prof. Jayawardane suggested to seek possibility of inviting Visiting professors/Exchange staff to the ongoing PhD/Departmental programs using other available sources of funding like UGC/FGS funding for visiting scholars and appointing them as resource persons for the program with a gratuity allowance.
      3. Prof. Perera suggested to have collaborations with International Water Management Institute (IWMI), Water Board and National Science Foundation (NSF) and inviting their overseas staff as resource persons. Prof. Wijesekera commented that the program already have a good rapport with these institutions, however, it is difficult to find resource parsons exactly matching the schedules and interests of the program.
      4. Prof. Perera further suggested that ADB and Colombo Plan links of the university may also be used to find suitable resource persons.
   5. ***Award of Madanjeet Singh Gold Medal for the Best Student***
      1. Prof. Coomaraswamy requested the University to work out the selection procedures and other details to commence the above award to a selected student from each batch as a measure of encouraging students to perform better.
      2. Prof. Jayawardane and Prof. Perera suggested to adhere to a similar approach as followed for other scholarship schemes in the university and requested Prof. Wijesekera to propose a suitable selection procedure.
3. **Agenda Item No. 3: UMCSAWM Annual Report (December 2016 - November 2017)**
   1. Prof. Wijesekera tabled the UMCSAWM Annual Report 2017 and all the members present considered the Report and found it satisfactory.
   2. He commented that the UMCSAWM Water Conference organized in 2016 was a great success and remarkable achievement of students as the entire publication proceedings were based on students’ project based learning activities and research projects.
   3. Prof. Jayawardane appreciated the UMCSAWM for organizing this national level event and recommended to seek assistance from available funding sources like UGC/FGS/ NSF/Dean’s Office to further enhance the participation and to invite international participants.
   4. Prof. Jayawardane and Prof. Perera emphasized the need of promoting it to a regional/ international level event and making it a great success as a reward to the students.
4. **Agenda Item No. 4: Program Expenditure & Committed Costs to date (Closing & Proposed Budgets)**
   1. The Budget proposal for UMCSAWM for 2017-2019, which was part of the Annual Report, was tabled. The Closing and Proposed budgets have been submitted to SAF-India
5. **Agenda Item No. 5: Ongoing M.Sc. Program (2017/2019) and issues**
   1. Prof. Wijesekera thanked SAF for extended support for the program continuation.
   2. He further appreciated the assistance provided by all SAF chapters during selection period, expressing his satisfaction in having a full participation of 8 scholars in the 4th Intake (ongoing Programme) for the second consecutive time, but at the same time, he was not entirely happy with the quality of the students.
   3. He further mentioned that no applications were received from Maldives and only one application for the full-time program was received from Sri Lanka. However, the applicant was not selected based on the interview results (lack of commitment) and additional positions were given to Afghanistan and Bhutan.
   4. He stressed that even the research projects were introduced at the very beginning of the 1st semester, the students have commenced their research project work late and with a very slow start this time too, and emphasized the need of allocating 1 ~3 month of extra time for research completion at the end of the regular one-year program.
   5. Prof. Jayawardane, Prof. Perera and Prof. Coomaraswamy suggested to forward a request/proposal to SAF with strong academic justification and to seek possibilities of securing additional funding/self-funding.
6. **Agenda Item No. 6: Forthcoming MSc. Programme (2018/2020)**
   1. Prof. Wijesekera reported that the ongoing 4th Intake will be completing their one-year program in early May, 2018 and the new 5th Intake (2018/2020 Batch) will be recruited in September 2018 and the advertising procedures will be commenced soon.
   2. Prof. Jayawardane commented about having wider publicity to the program and the possibility of seeking assistance from the University’s International Affairs Division and also accessing contact databases of the Undergraduate/Postgraduate and Faculty of Graduate Studies (FGS) units to disburse application information and materials.
   3. Prof. Jayawardane suggested to appoint a selected advertising/marketing agency to carry out an extensive advertising propaganda both locally and regionally with media and online resources/electronic distribution to attract better prospective candidates.
   4. Prof. Perera also suggested to contact ADB and Colombo Plan Secretariat for further assistance in distributing information.
7. **Agenda Item No. 7: Any other matters and Date for the next BoM Meeting**
   1. Prof. Wijesekera highly appreciated all the support and assistance extended by outgoing Vice-Chancellor Prof. Jayawardane.
   2. He also thanked Prof. Coomaraswamy and Prof. Perera for allocating their valuable time for this meeting and for all the supportive comments and directions.
   3. The Board proposed to convene the next BoM meeting to follow up the progress about in one year’s time, possibly in October/November 2018.
   4. Online / Skype / Teleconference meetings with SAF-India will be scheduled in between if a need arises.
8. **Adjournment**
   1. Prof. Jayawardane and Prof. Wijesekera thanked all BoM members, SAF representatives and all participants again and the meeting was adjourned at 4.30 pm.