



# Sardar Patel University Vallabh Vidyanagar

## Best Practice 1

### 1. Title:

**Inclusiveness: Freeships, Scholarships/Fellowships, Cash-Rewards and Other Financial Assistance to the Students, Academic and Administrative Staff**

### 2. Objectives of the Practice

University has been making conscious efforts to be inclusive in all its activities. Specifically, greater care is taken to ensure that all the possible help is extended through financial assistance and that maximum students get the benefit of various freeships, scholarships and other available financial aids. Care is also taken that the academic, as well as administrative staff too, get such assistance wherever and whenever needed and possible. Financial assistance is provided as well as facilitated by the university. At the heart of the practice, the objective is to ensure that students, faculty members and administrative staff avail the financial assistance catering to their needs on various occasions for various purposes.

The other objectives are:

- To increase opportunities for the students to have access to higher education
- To address financial concerns of students, academic and administrative staff to some extent
- To motivate students and faculty members to perform better in academics

### 3. The Context

Financial assistance has proved itself a need, support and morale boosting for stake-holders

The surge in the gross enrollment ratio in higher education brings with it various challenges. One of them is a cash crunch. Scholarships, Fellowships, and Freeships are some of the initiatives to help students overcome such challenges. The university made efforts to ensure that students become aware of such government initiatives and avail themselves of the opportunities. It was also observed that all the deserving students, despite the efforts made by the government, were not eligible for scholarships. Their studies suffered because

of the financial crunch. In such a scenario, financial assistance from the fund received from the self-financed fund was envisioned and assistance from NGOs was utilised for the same.

In addition to the approval of and permission for capacity building and research, financial assistance in the form of participation fees and rewards was initiated for the qualitative research work. The aim was to boost the morale of the research scholars as well as the faculty members.

The fees waiver initiative began to ensure higher education to the wards of administrative staff studying at the university and the interest-free festival and food grain allowances were given to ease the financial worries of the Class III employees.

#### **4. The Practice**

For every type of assistance three step process is followed:

- (i) Simple process for the applicants - from registration/application to receiving the financial assistance
- (ii) Transparent and timely process of the application
- (iii) Prompt and well-timed disbursement of the amount

As far as the students are concerned, the efforts of the university are twofold: Facilitate the students in availing government scholarships/fellowships and make maximum provision for those who are not entitled to government benefits through the endowment fund as well as the fund generated from the self-financed courses. All the possible efforts are made so that the cash crunch does not become a hindrance in the pursuit of dreams and progress.

Faculty members are provided financial assistance to attend conferences/seminars/workshops as well as rewarded for their qualitative research. The administrative staff is offered financial support for the higher education of their wards studying at the university and especially Class III employees are helped by providing interest-free loans in the form of food grain and festival allowances.

**EBC, SC, ST, OBC Scholarships/Fellowships:** Consistent efforts are made to ensure that the eligible students avail various government scholarships/fellowships. In addition to imparting timely information and guidance through orientation programmes, web-portal as well as by attending to personal queries, extra care is taken to approach and intimate the students through the departmental administrative office as well as the department to see that the student meets the deadline at each step. The students who do not complete the initiated process are traced and guided to complete the process.

**Financial Assistance from the Self-Financed Fund and by NGOs:** Conceptualised in 2005, the practice of financial support from their fees to the students is unique and reflects the intentions and vision of the university to provide higher education access to deserving

students over and above the grant-in-aid intake. Criteria are fixed. Based on that a merit-based list is prepared and the scholarship is awarded. The amount and number of the scholarships will vary but many students have got the benefit of this initiative. The total number of free studentships available in each department is 5% of the total strength of the department. Free studentships are awarded to the postgraduate students reading for their Master's degree, who are otherwise not eligible for the Economically Backward Class Free studentships or Scholarships for the Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe and other Backward Class students. Support from NGOs too helps students ease their financial worries.

### **Earn While You Learn**

The *Earn While You Learn* initiative was introduced to support students from the economically weaker section. The other objective was to offer remunerative practical training (Rs. 40-45 per hour) as per their interest and aptitude as well as possibilities at the university. The students would work 2 to 4 hours per day without disturbing their academic schedule. The students were allowed to work for a maximum of 50 hrs per month.

### **Cash Rewards to Teachers and Research Scholars**

Cash rewards for Innovative Research have been instituted (patent, copyright or having a direct impact on the society) for teachers as well as students from the interest generated from the corpus fund. Such teachers are felicitated for their research work on every Annual Convocation Day.

### **Financial Assistance to Faculty Members towards capacity building:**

Faculty members are motivated to participate in and contribute through various research activities. Financial support is given to participate in seminars/conferences.

### **Financial Assistance to Administrative Staff and Class III Employees**

Interest-free Food Grain Allowance and Festival Allowance to the Class III employees (regular and daily wagers) has been one of the most supportive initiatives practised by the university. The fees of the wards of the administrative staff are waived off.

### **Covid-19 Assistance**

Amidst the unprecedented crisis like the Covid-19 pandemic, provision for special financial assistance was made by the university to its entire academic and administrative staff irrespective of their cadre. The only criterion was the misery that befell them.

## **5. Evidence of Success**

The data of the last five years is proof that such various initiatives and efforts of the government and the university practices have helped and motivated the beneficiaries.

The data of the beneficiaries suggests the outreach of the various efforts and practices:

### 5.1 Students

Details of Freeship, Scholarship and Other Financial Assistance to Students	2016-2021
	Total Beneficiaries
5.1.1 Government Aided – PG Students & Research Scholars	6784
5.1.2 Institution Funded – PG Students	0675
5.1.3 Scholarship given by NGO	0016
5.1.4 Earn While You Learn	0046
5.1.5 Cash Rewards for Research Papers	0033
<b>Total Beneficiaries</b>	<b>7554</b>

### 5.2 Faculty Members

Details of the Financial Assistance Provided	2016-2021
	Total Beneficiaries
5.2.1 Financial Assistance in the form of fees to attend conferences/ seminars	102
5.2.2 Seed Money Grant to Faculty Members	019
5.2.3 Cash Rewards for Research Papers	056
5.2.4 Covid-19 Assistance	003
<b>Total Beneficiaries</b>	<b>180</b>

### 5.3 Administrative Staff and Class III Employees

Details of the Financial Assistance Provided	2016-2021
	Total Beneficiaries
5.3.1 .Fee Waiver to the Wards of the Administrative Staff	013
5.3.2 Interest-Free Food Grain Allowance	905
5.3.3 Interest-Free-Festival Allowance	966
5.3.4 Covid-19 Assistance	013
<b>Total Beneficiaries</b>	<b>1897</b>

## 6. Problems Encountered and Resources Required

Human resources to manage the funding and maintain the record and more financial assistance from the government or endowment fund would surely enhance the outreach of the practice.

## Best Practice 2

### 1. Title of the Practice:

#### Environment and Energy Conservation: Practices and Initiatives

### 2. Objectives of the Practice:

- To respect and feel oneness with the environment which is responsible for the existence
- To carry forward the legacy of pioneering efforts by the founders of the university in ecosystem restoration
- To generate awareness among all the stakeholders of the university about the need and importance of environmental and energy conservation
- To impart education for the practice of a sustainable way of living
- To train the students to be the ambassadors to the world and the future generations by developing a sense of respect towards Mother Nature and implementing green practices to conserve natural resources and biodiversity.

### 3. The Context:

Sustainable development is at the very roots of Sardar Patel University. Known as a Green Town of Gujarat State, Vallabh Vidyanagar essentially was developed to create the First Rural Residential University Township of the post-Independent India. More than 80 tree species were planted on the roadside by the founder Vice-Chancellor of the university. Today, it has hundreds of trees in a small area in Gujarat State and is replete with green coverage.

The university, since its inception, has been working to infuse environmental consciousness amongst youth through education, extension, training, and research activities in almost all disciplines. The university firmly believes that it is not only the need of the hour but also the conscious responsibility to be shouldered by the stakeholders at the university.

### 4. The Practice:

The Sardar Patel University has shown distinctiveness through the arduous efforts by staff and students in:

- a. Creation of another Green Belt:** Continuing the legacy of the founders, the efforts of the faculty members and students of the PG Department of Biosciences have converted a 2006 barren land into a lush green belt that is equally rich in biodiversity. QR Codes on the trees easily generate awareness and knowledge among the visitors.
- b. Environmental Education and Training:** Faculty of Sciences, Commerce & Management, Humanities and Social Sciences, Home-Science and Education have courses/units focusing on the environment and its related aspects. Cocurricular and

extracurricular activities (competitions, exhibitions, talks, workshops, excursions and expeditions, quizzes etc) related to environment are frequently organised.

**c. Research and Publication:** Academic fraternity at the university has been actively studying the issues concerning the environmental crisis and has contributed significantly through research publications, research projects, patents and PhD dissertations.

**d. Green Practices:** The university is proactive towards environmental conservation practices. The details are as follows:

- i. There are 07 rainwater harvesting and recharge wells.
- ii. A unique natural air cooling system exists at the sports complex.
- iii. Solar Water Heating Systems are installed at hostels.
- iv. Most of our buildings follow the OTS and universal design with anthropometric dimensions of learning spaces, offering enough sunlight and aeration.
- v. Use of energy-efficient electrical devices is in practice.
- vi. Roof Top Solar Power Plants are installed in 11 buildings
- vii. An innovative small wind generator was developed at the Community Science Center and is functioning. Community Science Center has also established Nature and Environment Club under which various activities such as seminars, congress, visits to the botanical garden for school students, the orientation of school teachers, environmental awareness activities, different competitions, talks etc are organized.
- viii. The university is one of the first in the area to install the Dual Axis Solar Tracking systems in 4 buildings.
- ix. CNG pipeline installation is done at three departments and a hostel.
- x. One of the SSIP projects, recently granted to an alumnus, is about making compost from the bio-waste on the university campus.
- xi. Waste management policy is followed. Bio-waste generated at the Health Center is handled and managed under the MoU with Gujarat Pollution Control Board. All the answer books for exams are disposed to the vendors with an undertaking that the waste would be recycled.
- xii. The Animal Rescue and Rehabilitation drive with an NGO, named Vidyanagar Nature Club has been taken up by the students of Business Management.
- xiii. The university has laid now a policy to generate awareness, and facilitate and support eco-friendly initiatives and practices.
- xiv. E-publications spreading awareness about environment and eco-friendly ways are released by the Community Science Centre, Sardar Patel University.

## **5. Evidence of Success:**

**a. Creation of another Green Belt:** The green belt spread across 15 acres of land at the Department of Biosciences, the satellite campus, houses 450 recorded species of various life forms, including 238 trees and plants (not a single fallen leaf is burnt), 17 reptiles, 93 birds, 67 butterfly, 47 insects, 72 spider species.

**b. Environmental Education and Training:** This has been an integral part of teaching-learning and research practices through courses/units taught, outreach programmes

- conducted by Community Science Centre (Visits, Exhibitions, Competitions, Seminars, e-Publications Enhancing Environmental Awareness etc. Approximately 1000 programmes 2016-2021 reaching out to 1,00,000 people.), programmes broadcast at the Community Radio Station as well as efforts made by the faculty members and students through awareness initiatives in the nearby villages.
- c. **Research and Publication:** Agro-Economic Research Centre, an institute funded by the Government of India covering the states of Gujarat and Rajasthan, has undertaken research projects like Impact Analysis of Introduction of Renewable Energy Technologies in Five Tribal Villages of Gujarat and Working of Pressurised Irrigation Network System (PINS) in India in addition to spreading awareness among farmers. More than 100 research papers, 05 chapters in books and 03 books focusing on environment have been published by the faculty members. In the past five years, 5 PhD dissertations have also been guided. A patent on Natural Mosquitoes Repellent Formulation is filed by Dr Manish Kumar Sharma and Joy S Talati of the Department of Chemistry. One faculty member has also completed a Lead Auditor Course on Environment Management.
  - d. **Green Practices:** Dedicated efforts and consistency in diligently followed practices have earned Sardar Patel University the status of the First Green University of Gujarat with a Platinum ranking by Green Mentors, a United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) recognized Research Organization. The university has been also conferred with a Green University Award 2021 at the 5<sup>th</sup> NYC Green School Conference 2021 organized by Green Mentors in association with Arizona State University on 24<sup>th</sup> September 2021.

## 6. **Problems Encountered and Resources Required:**

Limitations of adequate land for creating a biodiversity park and trained manpower were the main issues of concern and the same are under consideration. The technical staff is finding alternatives to sensor-based – Light/motion responding outdoor lights to overcome their drawbacks. Necessary funding and manpower can escalate the effort of the university.

## 7. **Notes**

Sardar Patel University has a vibrant mission to empower society through eco-friendly solutions. The university is committed to being a part of innovative sustainable education and development.

A Sardar Patel University Sustainable Innovative Education and Development Cell has been framed to work for proactive participation in the celebration of the UN decade of Ecosystem restoration 2021-2030.