MINUTES OF AIT GOVERNING BODY MEETING HELD ON 17 JUN 2021 THROUGH VIDEO CONF

1.   Meeting of the Governing Body of AIT was held on Thursday, 17 Jun 21 at 1100 hrs in virtual mode on Google Meet VC platform, under the chairmanship of Maj Gen Ravi Jhaldial, SM; Offg COS HQ Southern Comd. The following attended the meeting :-

Ser No	Status	Name of Appointment	Attendance
(a)	Chairman	Maj Gen Ravi Jhaldial, SM, Offg COS, HQ Southern Comd. (Patron AIT)	Yes
(b)	Vice Chairman (Society Nominee)	Maj Gen Vivek Dogra, CSO, HQ Southern Comd. (Chairman AIT)	Yes
(c)	Member (Society Nominee)	Brig RK Sharma, SM, Offg Dy Comdt, CME Pune.	Yes
(d)	Member (Society Nominee)	Brig BS Negi, Dy JAG, HQ Southern Comd.	Yes
(e)	AICTE Nominee	Ex-Officio	No
(f)	DTE Nominee	Ex-Officio	No
(g)	Member (Society Nominee)	Col SPR Bhosle, SM, Director AWES, HQ Southern Comd.	Yes
(h)	Eminent Academician	Prof Hemant Abhyankar, State Govt Nominee.	Yes
(j)	Independent Member	Mr MS Unnikrishnan, CEO IIT B, Monash University and Ex CEO and MD Thermax India.	Yes
(k)	Independent Member	Mr Shrikant Badve, MD, Badve Industries.	Yes
(l)	Independent Member	Col Virender Kapoor, Ex Director SITM	No
(m)	Independent Member	Mr Makarand Joshi, R&DE (Engrs), Dighi, Pune (on behalf of Dir R&D).	Yes
(n)	Independent Member	Mr Dinanath Kholkar, VP Analytics, TCS.	Yes
(o)	Member	Dr BP Patil, Principal, AIT.	Yes
(p)	Faculty Member	Dr GR Patil, HoD (E&TC), AIT	Yes
(r)	Faculty Member	Mrs Vaishali Ingale, Asst Prof, IT Dept, AIT	Yes
(t)	Member Secretary	Brig Abhay A Bhat, Director, AIT.	Yes

Welcome Address

2.   The meeting started with a welcome address by Director AIT. He mentioned that last GBM was held on 24 Jul 2019. Due to the pandemic and sudden lockdown in Mar 2020, the GBM planned then had to be cancelled and we could not get an opportunity to hold it on another date. He mentioned that due to certain recent developments there was a need to conduct this GBM at a short notice. He thanked all the members for responding and attending the meeting despite the short notice.

Review of Previous Agenda Pts and Passing of the Minutes

3.   **Vision Document 2019-2024.**   The Director displayed the highlights of the Vision document which was finalized and approved in 2019. Discussion took place about the progress on the grant of academic autonomy. Prof Abhyankar brought out the importance of academic autonomy. He brought to the notice his experience of being associated with four Engg colleges during their transition to autonomy. He emphasized upon the enhancement in academic quality such change can bring about. He also remarked that such change would also bring in more research/innovation along with collaboration with foreign universities. He mentioned that as per NEP 2020 every college will have to go for autonomy, sooner or later. Director requested Prof Abhyankar to send write-up about benefits and implications of autonomy, based on his experiences in these education institutes; for sharing with all concerned. Prof Abhyankar agreed to prepare such a document. Mr. Unnikrishnan mentioned that AWES is a unique education society, with specific objectives. He added that with autonomy, AWES can have better control over its institutions, especially in academic matters, apart from administration. Till now such control was with the University only.

4.   **Centres of Excellence.**   The Director gave out the progress achieved in the centres of excellence viz, Entrepreneurship Cell, AI - Robotics and IoT.

5.   **Introduction of Merit-cum-Means Scholarship Scheme for Students of AIT**. The Director informed all that the proposal of additional scholarship has not been accepted both at HQ Southern Comd and HQ AWES; due to its incompatibility with other colleges of AWES.

6.   Confirmation of previous GBM agenda points was proposed by Mr Unnikrishnan and seconded by Mr Shrikant Badve, as well as Dr. BP Patil.

Discussion on Agenda Pts

7.   **Agenda Point 1 : Introduction of ME (Data Science) Course in Comp Engg**. The Director explained the requirement and justification of introducing the new PG program. He mentioned that the proposal was accepted by AWES after proper deliberation and now the application needs to be submitted with SPPU for the course to be launched in AY 2022-23.

8.   The proposal was welcomed and supported by all members. Mr Unnikrishnan asked as to why AIT cannot offer degree as MTech instead of ME as most of the students like the MTech Degree. Director told that as we are affiliated to SPPU we have to follow the nomenclature provided by them i.e. ME. However, we can project the request to the university providing the relevance of it being called MTech. Dr GR Patil went a step further and mentioned that it is more of an MS program, as it is about Data Science.

9.   Mr Dinanath Kholkar brought out that Data Science is relevant to all branches of Engg. Hence the admission should be not to be restricted to Comp/IT students and should be open to other branches also. Director mentioned that it will be open to all branches and this has been conveyed to our alumni and students also. Mr Kholkar assured that TCS will be happy to extend any assistance required in conduct of the program.

10.   Decision.   The Chairman directed that AIT should apply for the program. The resolution of applying for ME (Data Science), was proposed by Mr. Unnikrishnan and seconded by Prof Abhyankar and Dr GR Patil.

11.   Agenda Point 2 : Closure of ME (Engg Design) Course of Mech Engg. Director AIT presented the case and justification for recommending the closure of this ME course which had started in 2015-16. The main reason for the same has been the poor response with only 30% vacancies being filled except in the year of inception. One of the main causes for this is non availability of placements for such candidates.

12.   The proposals evoked mixed responses from the members. Mr Unnikrishnan mentioned that the demand for PG Design Engrs has reduced over last few years. This is because manual skills of design engineering are not required any more. New digital design tools and programs are now available, which can be easily acquired by BE Mech employees after short training. He further mentioned that only those students who are aspiring for a career in research and teaching would be opting for such ME program. This would actually mean that AIT may have to redesign the syllabus on the lines of IITs/ NITs. He remarked that AIT is a predominantly a teaching college, with emphasis on welfare of defense personnel. Hence the call to close the course needs to be taken by the management, based on viability of continuing the program. Mr Dinanath Kholkar questioned why there is a sharp decline in the admissions after the first year i.e 2015-16. He asked if any analysis was done. The Principal responded that the main reason behind decline was lack of campus placement opportunities for ME students. Based on this, students of first batch gave a negative feedback which led to many aspirants cancelling their admissions. Unfortunately, ME courses in most other colleges also face similar problems.

13.   Prof Abhyankar was of the opinion that PG should NOT be closed. He mentioned that while the overall strength of students joining the course has declined, every year 4-6 army candidates have been joining regularly. As such that would be considered as good welfare. Based on his experience, he felt that for a college like AIT viability will not be an issue. Continuing with PG program will also provide opportunity to establish a PhD center. On the other hand, efforts for a tie up with industry for internships or industry sponsored project should be made to ensure that few of them can be absorbed by these industries. Mr Kholkar too was of the same opinion. Most of them felt that it is very difficult to start a program and such programs take time to stabilize. If closed in a hurry, AIT will find it difficult to restart such a program. As such 2020-21 response was badly affected by the uncertainties of COVID situation and we need to await for situation to normalize before gauging the realistic response. Mr Dinanath Kholkar added that lot of small scale manufacturing may get a boost post COVID as some of the manufacturing which was taking place in China, may get shifted to India with some value addition. He suggested that we may explore as to how the curriculum can be tuned by including modules of IoT, automation and robotics. Most of the members were in agreement with continuation of the program with suitable value addition, for at least one more year even if more than 50% vacancies remain unfilled.

14.   Decision.   The Chairman gave his view that he is in agreement with the members. He directed that AIT should take proactive action to provide industry specific inputs, and continue the program at least for one more year. Mr Dinanath Kholkar proposed the resolution to continue with the program of ME in Engg Design for one more year and it was seconded by Dr GR Patil.

15.   Agenda Point 3: Exploring Option to Convert one Division of E&TC (60 Students) to E&CE. The Director narrated the process followed during the approval of additional division of 60 students in E&TC program. He mentioned that concurrently in 2020, SPPU had introduced a new program Electronics and Computers Engg (E&CE) under Electronics Board

of Studies. There was a suggestion that AIT may convert one of its two divisions to this new program. However he personally was in favour of status quo.

16.   Mr Dinanath Kholkar expressed his view that AIT must focus on E&TC rather than E&CE. As such AIT already has 180 (50%)intake in computer and IT branch. There is a lot of scope and potential in telecommunication domain in future. He also suggested that AIT can propose a dual degree with a minor from other stream. Dr GR Patil told that such provision exists and such program has been recently launched by SPPU. As per this students of Comp, IT and E&TC can get honors degree in AI&ML, Data Science and IoT. Mr Dinanath Kholkar also suggested that if possible you can also think about dual degree in 5G technology, Dr GR Patil said that AIT will submit such proposal to SPPU. All members were of the opinion that no change from existing program of E&TC be carried out. In addition these students be encouraged to take up the honors program.

17.   **Decision.** The Chairman directed that the status quo be maintained.

Misc Points and Conclusion of Meeting

18.   The members discussed some other general points as follows:-

(a)   Mr Dinanath Kholkar informed every one about Pune knowledge Cluster (PKC) and its relevance to AIT. He mentioned that he is part of that initiative and AIT can take benefit of same. He also mentioned that many innovations required for defence forces is also being addressed by this cluster. Brig RK Sharma, SM, Offig Dy Commandant of CME mentioned that CME is also part of this cluster and they are getting benefit of the same.   Director AIT further mentioned that AIT is in communication with CME and six students are already interning with CME.

(b)   Prof Abhyankar remarked that status and progress of R&D can also be presented in GBM, with details of faculty Research paper publications, Research project carried out etc. The frequency of GBM should be twice a year and should be regularly held. Director agreed on the suggestion and mentioned that college activities with special emphasis on R&D will be covered henceforth. He was hopeful that next meeting can be planned in Dec month, and that it would be held in person. Director mentioned that there has been a substantial progress in quality publications as well as patents and copyrights. He also mentioned that AIT has come out with a proper IPR policy and has been encouraging start ups and entrepreneurship in a big way.

(c)   Mr Unnikrisnan remarked that AWES should give better clarity about the institutes status, whether AIT remains a teaching institute or should it get involved in R&D. Only if it involves in R&D, it will have a better standing, worldwide. AIT also needs to take more efforts for industry participation in research as it is now a norm evident in the IITs.

Closing Remarks

19.   Patron thanked all GBM members and remarked that it was a very good brain storming session, He appreciated all inputs received from the members. He also agreed that AIT needs to strengthen its R&D activity as it is mentioned in its Vision. He was hopeful that AIT can start a PhD research center leading to good quality research so that AIT can be a renowned institute. AIT also needs to think about starting courses in fields like IoT, Robotics which are futuristic industry demands.
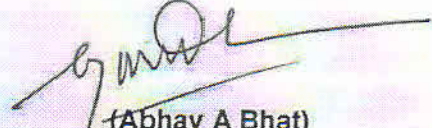
20.   He also expressed hope of obtaining go ahead from the AWES for autonomy as a very fruitful discussion had taken place during the presentation to AG last week.

Vote of Thanks

21. The Director thanked the Chairman and all other members for their valuable contributions.

Case File No: AIT/0044/GBM/Adm

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(Abhay A Bhat)
Brig (Retd)
Director

Date : 05 Jul 2021

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Through emails

5. Brig RK Sharma, SM, Offg Dy Comdt, CME Pune.

6. Prof Hemant Abhyankar

7. Mr MS Unnikrishnan, CEO IIT B,

8. Mr Shrikant Badve

9. Col Virender Kapoor (Retd),

10. Mr Makarand Joshi, R&DE (Engrs), Dighi, Pune.

11. Mr Dinanath Kholkar, VP Analytics, TCS,

12. Jt Director AIT.

13. Dr BP Patil, Principal AIT, Pune
14. Dr GR Patil, HOD E & TC, AIT Pune.
15. HOD Comp, AIT Pune.
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