



GLOBAL ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

of Bengal Engineering and Science University, Shibpur

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June 13, 2009

SECRETARY'S REPORT

It is my great pleasure in reporting the activities of Global Alumni Association of Bengal Engineering and Science University (GAABESU) before you, the members of the Association, at this Annual General Meeting (AGM). This is the last AGM of the first elected Executive Committee (EC).

Activities of the Association

It has been two years since the first elected EC took over. GAABESU was formed and registered as per West Bengal Societies Act XXVI of 1961 Vide Registration no S/IL/29880 of 2005-2006 dated 10th June, 2005. As for any new association, we are still going through growing pain and it will take a while to organize all aspects of the association. Although, we have not been able to achieve everything that we wanted, the accomplishments are still significant. Any established organization will be proud to come this far in these two short years. In the next few paragraphs, I will provide a brief description of different activities that we have pursued and the results of those activities.

Annual Accounts and Audit Report

The Receipts and Payments Account and Audit Report for the financial year 2007-08 had already been circulated to all members in the last year. The Receipts and Payments Account and Audit Report for the financial year 2008-09 are being placed. Besides Receipts and Payments Account and Audit Report for the period from 01.04.2009 to 06.06.2009 is also placed before the members Membership Funds shown below have been kept in fixed deposit with UBI till date.

- a) Local Fund – Rs.16,82,364/-
- b) Foreign Fund in FCRA A/c – Rs.12,20,000/- carrying quarterly interest Rs.25,033/- (net of TDS)

Executive Committee

Election for the new EC has just been completed. The chairman of the election commission will be announcing the names of EC members in this AGM. I would, on behalf of the outgoing EC, like to thank the Chairman and Members of the Election Commission for completing the election process in time. I hope the new EC will build upon the success of the last EC with the lessons learnt and expand the activities for the benefit of BESU. Once new EC elects office-bearers, it will start leading the activities of GAABESU.

Conversion of BESU

This effort was started in 2003 by a group of Alumni. With the formation of GAABESU, this activity got a big boost and a significant numbers of Alumni have since been actively supporting this cause at all levels. Due to repeated disturbances in the campus in 2008 and subsequent mishandling of the situation, conversion got delayed. However, GAABESU will be pushing this issue as the campus environment has improved significantly with a new VC at the helm of affairs. We hope the new government at the centre will finally implement the Anandakrishnan Committee (set up by the same government in its previous term) recommendations and convert BESU to an INI soon.

Scholarship

Among GAABESU's different activities, Scholarship program has been a success story. Although, it started in San Francisco, USA about 11 years back, it has expanded substantially when it came under GAABESU umbrella. GAABESU has increased the number of scholarships/admission grants/book grants to the needy students substantially for the last two years. This year, we have added a new category of scholarships called "Awards for Excellence" to be awarded to a student on merit. This year we have given 61 scholarships @ Rs.12,000.00, 18 half-scholarships @ Rs.6,000.00, 8 admission grants totaling Rs.69,000.00, 16 book grants totaling Rs.16,000.00 and five "Awards for Excellence" totaling Rs.74,500.00. The total award amounted to Rs.999,500.00. The names of the scholars and donors are posted in our web site. GAABESU thanks all donors for their generosity. Donors in USA are eligible for tax deduction. In this connection, I must record our appreciation for the help provided by the Vice Chancellor, BESU and University Administration in receiving fund in foreign currency (in absence of FCRA clearance) for the scholarships.

Publicity

GAABESU has been publishing newsletters in every alternate month. I am glad to mention that our newsletter (ALUMNI LINK) are published professionally and carries news of the BESU community. In addition, publicity group takes care of the web site. They update the site with news and other BESU related information almost daily. The publicity group also helps in editing GAABESU e-mails/letters before they are sent to the alums. In the past publicity group has communicated with printed media to publicize BESU's case for conversion to INI and arranges tele-conference between BESU campus and alums living abroad. Publicity group also published flyers for scholarship and emergency funds to acknowledge all donors and provide regular status.

Membership

We have been able to enroll over two hundred new members from the two graduating classes by encouraging them to join using their Institute caution money (INR 1000). Dr. Swapan Saha and Lt. Col. (Retd.) Anjan Kumar Ghosh initiated this program with the help of our EC members and should be commended for this effort. We have also enrolled few other new members. Now our Membership strength as on 6th June, 2009 is as follows:-

Life Member (Active) – 566

Life Member (Pending) – 47

Annual Member (Active) – 218

Annual Member (Pending) – 10

Total Members as of 06.06.09 – 841

Although the responses from the alums to join GAABESU have not been overwhelming, we do expect more enrolments in the coming years when the alums find out how GAABESU sponsored projects, financed by membership fees, have positively impacted the campus environment.

Emergency Fund

GAABESU has been able to help few of our Alumni/Alumnae by providing emergency assistance during their time of difficulties. All contributions are acknowledged and posted in our web site. Since the last AGM of September 2007, fund drives were undertaken to help Ayan Basu, Abhijit Das, Kripamoy Mondal, Late Kamal Das, Dipak Majumder and Arindam Saha (still an active case).

It may be mentioned that similar efforts were maintained by the Alumni before the formation of GAABESU and with the leadership from GAABESU now all such efforts are integrated under one umbrella. The guiding document (with the scope of emergency aid, how to raise and disburse fund) has been developed and updated in September (2008) to reflect the current process with the names

of the recipients as listed in our website. Total contribution is estimated to be INR 50 lakhs since 1998-99 (including the period prior to the formation of GAABESU).

The emergency team has also undertaken a fund raising campaign to create a corpus fund of Rs. 50 lakhs that can be utilized in the time of need and replenish with individual campaign as and when any alumni or their family members seek help through their local Alumni Chapter, friends or relatives. Excess money from the funds of Tania Pramanik and Ayan Basu has been transferred to this general fund for future utilization. We thankfully acknowledge the contributions of all alums to the emergency fund.

Finance and Administration

GAABESU has not received FCRA approval yet. I hope that the next EC will actively pursue this matter. Otherwise, it will be difficult to receive donations in foreign currency. We also need to pursue 80(G) for the donors in India.

Mentorship Program

Over the last few years, many of our alumni received informal request /appeal from current students for professional and personal guidance. To meet those growing needs, GAABESU launched the first mentorship program in July 2007, with full support and commitment from the VC, Deans, PICSA, and GAABESU Executive Committee. The outline of the program, including goals presentation, process

and forms are available in GAABESU website through the following link:

http://www.becollege.org/news/news_item.asp?NewsID=348

Our ambitious goal was to have 50 students and 10-15 mentors in one year. In five months i.e., by 1st quarter 2008, 85 students and 21 alumni enrolled in the program. *North American alumni have overwhelmingly responded to be mentors. We need more contributions from India-based alums. And a surprise – more and more students (~50%) are looking to do their higher studies in India, and not abroad.*

However, campus unrest and absolute loss of academic environment during better part of 2008/09 also negatively impacted enrolling new mentees. In 2008, we didn't open another enrollment window, nor did we get much request from students to find mentors. Effectively, the program didn't grow beyond the initial group of mentors and mentees

New VC has brought in a very different outlook to academics and career development among BESU students. Mentorship can be a very effective tool to make that happen. We suggest the following –

- Revive the mentorship program with an appeal/message from VC to student community to enroll and take advantage of this unique program
- Have professors actively encourage students to not only join mentorship, but act professionally to take most advantage
- Sign up more mentors using various yahoo groups (overseas, batch etc) if student interest picks up
- Make mentorship a standard talking point in every alumni-student interaction – be it alumni seminar, reunion, business meet etc.

We have necessary infrastructure in place to ramp up. We can even encourage few students to act as unpaid intern to administer the program i.e., matching mentors with students, e-mail correspondences etc. Overall, this program has tremendous potential that we haven't fully tapped due to resource constraints and lack of positive environment within the college. With recent changes, there is clear value to recommit to this.

Corpus Fund

GAABESU has decided to develop a Corpus Fund, the interest of which will be used to run the organization. We have received some donations. We will be asking alums to contribute to this fund.

GAABESU Recommendations to BESU

For the last two/three years, student unrests affected the campus. Fighting among different group of students and subsequent closure of the university became regular phenomena during that period. GAABESU took an initiative to find out the root causes of the problems and come up with the recommendations to address them. A committee consisting of four EC members discussed this with the then VC and got his permission to proceed with the initiatives. They interviewed students from different hostels/classes, faculty members and hostel superintendents and use the results of the interviews to find the root causes of the disturbances. Based on the interviews, the committee came up with the recommendations which they discussed with the past VC. As the VC was leaving his position, he did not take decisions with respect to GAABESU recommendations. However, with the arrival of new VC, those recommendations were discussed and the new VC readily accepted most of our recommendations. We have noticed marked improvement in the campus environment since his arrival. This was the result of implementing some of his novel ideas in conjunction with a number of our recommendations. The VC has plans to implement some other recommendations in the future.

Recognition

GAABESU recognizes the alumni/alumnae who have reached commendable milestones in their careers during the last year. We salute them. These are not only their personal accomplishments but also recognition of our Alma Mater that has nurtured them.

Appreciation

I, on behalf of the EC office bearers, fully appreciate selfless works put up by all EC members and many other Alums all over the world without which GAABESU could never be at this stage. I shall also fail in my duty if I do not mention help and co-operation extended by few members, residing outside India, whose help and active participation were essential for me to run GAABESU smoothly. I appreciate all help extended by BESU authorities, faculty members and others in the administration without whose help it would not have been possible to move GAABESU forward. At the end, I thank all Alumni/Alumnae irrespective of their affiliations with GAABESU for their help and guidance in making GAABESU the best Alumni Association in India and a true representative of all alums in its interaction with BESU.

With warm regards to all the members of GAABESU,



(Santanu Kumar Karmakar)
Hony. Secretary, GAABESU