



MAR THOMA COLLEGE, TIRUVALLA

Education par Excellence and Educated for the Society

(Accredited with A-Grade by the National Assessment and Accreditation Council - NAAC)

Affiliated to Mahatma Gandhi University, Kerala

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7.2.1. Describe two best practices successfully implemented by the Institution as per NAAC format provided in the Manual.

Best Practice: I

Title of the Practice: Student Entrepreneurship and Industry-Institute Interface; enhancing student employability.

Objectives of the Practice: To create a symbiotic relationship that benefits both academia and industry. This is achieved by research collaborations, internships and training programmes, commercialization of research outputs, placement drives etc. The student entrepreneurship programmes of the college are aimed at nurturing the spirit of entrepreneurship among students through empirical learning. The main objective is to transform the classroom knowledge into entrepreneurial skills. and to enhance student employability by providing need based training and additional certifications based on the employer requirements.

The Context: The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 places a strong emphasis on student entrepreneurship and skill development, aiming to equip students with the necessary skills and knowledge to succeed in the modern competitive world. The policy necessitates the development of an entrepreneurial mindset and promotes innovation among students. Whereas the NEP 2020 envisions a massive transformation in the country's educational landscape, Mar Thoma College, Tiruvalla rightfully recognises the significance of nurturing entrepreneurship and industry specific skills among students. The industry-institute interface plays a crucial role in bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge gained in academic settings and practical application in real-world industrial scenarios. A productive interface between industry and academia in the present times of knowledge economy, is a critical prerequisite for ensuring good placements to the students. While employers still value

credentials like degrees and other academic qualifications, more and more have been turning to skill-based hiring in order to fill managerial positions.

The Practice: The establishment of entrepreneurship clubs, idea incubation and skill development centres in the campus offers the students with mentorship, resources, and networking opportunities to develop their entrepreneurial ventures. It helps to equip students with the tools necessary to become job creators rather than job seekers. Various skill development programmes were designed to foster and support the development of entrepreneurial skills and mind-set among students. The Centre for Advanced Training and Skill Development at Department of Biosciences was initiated with an objective to enhance student employability by providing need-based training and additional skill development programmes based on the employer requirements. Presently the training programmes were conducted by outsourcing various agencies empaneled by Additional Skill Acquisition Programme (ASAP), Govt. of Kerala and Kerala Development and Innovation Strategic Council (K-DISC). The Centre has already tied up with International Institute for Certification and Training (IICT), an approved training centre based in Kerala. The students were also sent for industrial training during vacations so as to prepare them for the practical aspects of working in specific industries. This type of training is designed to complement theoretical knowledge gained in academic settings with real-world, industry-specific applications. The college career guidance and placement cell offers training, placement drives, and collaborations with industry, that promote employment likelihoods for students. The Friday Market is a weekly event organised by the idea incubation centre, Department of Commerce, in association with Entrepreneurship Development Club, Mar Thoma College Thiruvalla. To promote entrepreneurship among students, stalls were put up inside the campus every Friday afternoon in order to market products made by the students of the institution. The M-THINK Idea Competition is another unique initiative by the Science Forum, Mar Thoma College Tiruvalla, aimed to foster the spirit of innovation and entrepreneurship among the students. The annual flagship contest intends to introduce new stimuli into the minds of young students and acknowledge the potentiality of their idea. The students were encouraged to propose innovative solutions across a broad range of social impact domains and selected ideas were supported for actualization by seed funding and mentorship.

The Physics Department of the college initiated a Skill development Centre which currently offers courses on electrical equipment maintenance for degree students. In addition to this, add-on courses on roof top solar PV system and advanced LED light design, assembly and repair were conducted in collaboration with ANERT Government of Kerala.

Evidence of Success: As testimony to its excellence, the students from the Entrepreneurship Development Club won state level student entrepreneur pitching competition, 2022 conducted by Kerala Institute for Entrepreneurship Development, Department of Industries & Commerce. The first batch of the training at the Centre for Advanced Training and Skill Development, Department of Biosciences was successfully completed during October 2022. A total of 25 students and one faculty member from the Department of Biosciences acquired HACCP Level-3 certification in food safety management from Highfield Inc.UK. During the past five years, a significant number of graduate and post graduate students were able to locate placements in their chosen areas of expertise soon after their graduation. The college has signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoUs) with various public and private institutes for fostering collaboration in research, placement, training and sharing of IPR.

Problems Encountered and Resources Require:

- A wide gap between the acquired knowledge and required knowledge. Students attain qualifications, but find it difficult to acquire employment because the expectations and aspirations of the employers are different from the theoretical knowledge attained through conventional educational systems.
- Managing the hectic academic schedule so as to accommodate EDPs and industrial training programmes within the limited time frame.
- Different priorities and timelines: The academic curriculum is driven by the pursuit of knowledge while industry is focused on profitability and commercialization. This misalignment often leads to conflicts in goals and expectations.

- Limited access to financial resources: can hinder their ability to fund student business ventures. Lack of funding may restrict students from developing prototypes, conducting market research, or scaling their businesses.
- Lack of expert faculty in industry-relevant technologies.

Best Practice: II:

Title of the Practice: Alumni-Academic Mentors Collective.

Objectives of the Practice: The alumni-academic mentors' collective in this institution is intended to foster a supportive environment that bridges the gap between current students and former students. Alumni mentors serve as valuable resources, offering insights into industry trends, career advice, and personal experiences that can inspire and enlighten the career aspirations of the students. This joint initiative aims to cultivate a sense of institutional belonging, where alumni engagement enriches the academic environment and also contributes to the institution's legacy of success. While reinforcing the alumni's ongoing relationship with their alma mater it also helps to meet the financial goals for scholarships and other campus developments.

The Context: In alignment with NEP 2020, The UGC highlights alumni as crucial stakeholders, bridging the academic and professional realms together. Alumni engagement with their alma mater takes various forms, from mentoring the current students and faculty to financial contributions and participation in policy-level governing bodies. The college has a dedicated Alumni association which helps to connect the alumni who have brought glory to their alma mater. With over 5000 alumni located in different parts of the world, we have overseas chapters in the US, Africa and Middle East. Our alumni represent the most prominent names in the fields of industry, research and policy making. Through regular interactions, alumni-academic mentorship collective endeavour to empower students to achieve their full potential This symbiotic relationship not only aids current students but also provides a platform for alumni to

give back, stay connected, and remain involved in the academic community, thus perpetuating a cycle of mutual growth and enrichment.

The Practice: The alumni network of the college serves as a vital link between the institution's illustrious past and its dynamic present. It is a testament to the enduring legacy of quality education, where former students, now distinguished in their respective fields, converge to give back to their alma mater. The alumni associations of Mar Thoma College, Tiruvalla are organised into four domestic and six international chapters spread across India, US, Europe and Middle East. The alumni association of the college conducts its annual general body meetings on 26th January and alumni family get-together on 15th August, every year. The Principal serves as the president of the alumni association with two vice-presidents (*i.e.* one former faculty and a former student), a general secretary (existing faculty) and two secretaries (male and female) and treasurer. The executive committee is responsible for making important decisions and overseeing the day-to-day operations of the association. The Alumni Newsletter published every year helps to effectively engage the alumni and strengthens their connection to the institution.

The alumni-academic mentors collective was put forward with a vision that the academic mentors having expertise in their respective fields share their expertise and interact with students so as to guide the younger generation to academic excellence. This noble initiative envisages to provide mentorship and academic assistance to the current students from notable alumni. A collective list of alumni academic mentors was prepared by the alumni association and was handed to the respective departments so as to invite them to share their expertise and experiences with the student community and motivate the young minds for their auspicious future. The alumni in their various capacities as academicians, researchers, political and administrative leaders voluntarily offer their expertise in their respective areas as resource persons for various seminars and enrichment programmes. Moreover, the alumni network of the college is one of the biggest sources of placement opportunities for students. Alumni members bestow their expertise in administrative and policy making decisions as legal advisors of the institution. They extend their administrative experience as members of the management body and various sub-committees to formulate policy in IQAC, infrastructure development and

finance. Alumni associations have instituted a substantial amount as scholarships and endowments that are distributed every year to encourage meritorious and to assist the needy students in their studies.

Evidence of Success:

- An amount of Rs. **16,00101/-** have been received from alumni as scholarships and endowments during the last year.
- Prize money and quality amplifier contribution by alumni (Ms. Nidhi, Mr. Shinu Abraham)
- 1970-73 B.Sc Physics batch during their Golden Jubilee Reunion instituted the Thampy Kurian Endowment of 15 lakhs in college.
- 1970-73 batch as part of golden jubilee year contributed 100,101/-

Previous years

- During the 2018-19 academic year, the college auditorium was renovated by the 1965-68 Degree batch with a generous contribution of Rs. 5, 30,000/- in connection with their Golden Jubilee Reunion.
- The quintessential 'Home for Homeless project' initiated by the students, staff and alumni as a part of the college SAPTHATHI project envisages to provide permanent shelters to the most needed people. With substantial financial support from college alumni two separate houses with eight cents of land were donated during the last year.
- The 1970-73 B.Sc batch sponsored a water purification system in Government LP School, Karipuzha, Mavelikara.
- During the COVID-19 pandemic, faculty members together with the alumni took initiative to donate gadgets for the needy students so that they could actively participate in the online teaching-learning mode.

- Each year we have more than 40 prominent alumni who visit the college as academic mentors or resource persons.
- The Department alumni associations serve as ideal platforms for students to reconnect, collaborate, and find right opportunities.

Problems Encountered and Resources Required

- Managing and updating a comprehensive alumni database is crucial for effective communication and alumni engagement.
- There exists a mismatch in alumni expertise and current academic content, as alumni may not be up-to-date with the latest curriculum changes or teaching methodologies.
- The existing regulatory frameworks and financial laws in the county may impose restrictions on the amount and type of contributions made by the alumni.
- The College alumni are multifarious in terms of their demographics, interests, and geographic locations. Creating engagement initiatives that appeal to a wide range of alumni is challenging.
- The alumni association of the college is in its period of transition. Alumni at different life stages have varying priorities and commitments. At present the average age of the college alumni is 70 plus. Connecting individuals across generations is a major challenge faced by the organisers of alumni meets.