

# Proposed UoP Mission Document: Is It Realistic Enough To Be Useful?

Dilip G. Kanhere

*Centre for Modeling and Simulation, University of Pune*

Mihir Arjunwadkar

*Centre for Modeling and Simulation, University of Pune*

April 16, 2007

**Synopsis.** We congratulate the Vice Chancellor and his Distinguished Team for their sincere, unprecedented, and timely initiative of formulating a Mission Document for the University of Pune (UoP). We feel that such an exercise should be undertaken by every State University in India if it has not done so already.

The proposed Mission Document has four parts; namely, a *Profile of the University* (Part I), a *Mission Statement* (Part II), the *Strategic Vision* (Part III), and a *Programme of Action* (Part IV). While we completely agree, deeply appreciate, and whole-heartedly support the *Mission Statement* and the *Strategic Vision*, we find that the suggested *Programme of Action*, although sincere, is at best cosmetic in nature, and is thus quite disappointing.

Specifically, we argue that the proposed *Programme of Action* lacks depth for the following reasons:

1. Fundamental reasons for the decline of the State Universities in general, and UoP in particular, have neither been recognised, nor analysed, let alone addressed.
2. While the proposed Mission Document has indeed recognised and *grasped* the phenomenon of globalization and its impact on the Indian nation, the *Programme of Action* completely fails to recognise and recommend fundamental, radical changes in the governance, acts, statutes, and organisational structure of the University.

We further argue that the purpose of a University is “to give the society what it **needs**, and not what it **wants**<sup>1</sup>.” We also argue that there is a need to distinguish between *education* and *training*: While *education* has a universal character, *training* is necessarily geared towards a specific niche, and is, by its very nature, of a spatio-temporally limited utility. We argue that the primary focus and loyalty of a University should be on the former, not the latter.

In this document, we first present sectionwise critique of the proposed Mission Document. Next, we present our analysis of the fundamental causes (necessarily very briefly) that have led to the decline of State Universities in India in general and UoP in particular. Finally, we present our view of what needs to be done, in the least, to make UoP flourish in the true spirit of a University.

By its very nature, this document is not (and cannot be) an exhaustive document with an in-depth analysis of, and a historical perspective on the development of, the University system in India. We are essentially reacting to the proposed draft of the Mission Document. Admittedly, our response is also focussed mainly on the UoP campus: This is not because we consider the non-campus component of the UoP less important; on the contrary, we argue that mass-scale undergraduate education is a complex issue that needs to be taken very seriously at an entirely different level.

Before we wind-up this synopsis, we note with regret that the *Distinguished Team who drafted the Mission Document does not include a single stakeholder from the University*: By a *stakeholder*, we mean an active, perceptive academician who currently belongs to the University system. It is no wonder the *Programme of Action* suggested has nothing solid to offer given that it is built upon weak foundations, naïve views, and unrealistic expectations.

---

<sup>1</sup>Edsger W. Dijkstra, *The Strengths of the Academic Enterprise* (1994). Emphasis ours.  
<http://www.cs.utexas.edu/users/EWD/ewd11xx/EWD1175.PDF>

# 1 Specific Comments on the Proposed Mission Document

## 1.1 Mission Statement (Part II)

As expected, this part of the Mission Document is well-focused and is in tune with the current ethos of globalization. It talks about excellence in teaching and research, and of course about social empowerment. In Sec. II.4, the aims have been penned very correctly: as creating a vibrant knowledge centre<sup>2</sup> and a global centre of excellence, as creating thought and action leaders. We especially appreciate the explicit mention of *Action Leaders* – we believe that without action Pundits are in reality pseudo-Pundits.

However, the specific reference to the “globalizing agriculture, industry and services sectors of Indian economy” is puzzling. Indeed, universities should not aim to serve any specific sector out of transient temporal compulsions.

**Education Vs. Training.** It is important to make a distinction between education and training. Good education is *always* relevant, provided

1. A University knows what good education means; and
2. A University is able to differentiate between *Education* and *Training*.

While *education* has a universal character, *training* is necessarily geared towards a specific niche, and is, by its very nature, of a spatio-temporally limited utility. The primary focus and loyalty of a University should be on the former, not the latter. This point of view is most eloquently expressed by two modern visionaries as follows:

*The purpose of a University is to give the society what it needs, and not what it wants.*

*Edsger W. Dijkstra, The Strengths of the Academic Enterprise, 1994*

*We don't even know what skills may be needed in the years ahead. That is why we must train our young people in the fundamental fields of knowledge, and equip them to understand and cope with change. That is why we must give them the critical qualities of mind and durable qualities of character that will serve them in circumstances we cannot now even predict.*

*John Gardner, Excellence, 1961*

Evidently, what John Gardner wrote back in 1961 is even more relevant *now* given the accelerated pace of technology development and the fast-changing nature of the modern-day world.

## 1.2 Strategic Vision (Part III)

The present Vice Chancellor has reminded us at least three times in meetings that this University is nowhere near the top: neither in the world nor within India. Now this reminder is also included in Sec. III.6 of the Mission Document.

Very correct, and we could not have agreed more.

**Who Claims UoP is “Oxford of the East?”** Let it be understood that the serious minded faculty on the UoP campus has never used the phrase *Oxford of the East*. This self-assigned glorification of the UoP is a convenient populist invention by pseudo-academicians playing to

---

<sup>2</sup>Knowledge base of an organisation is the sum total of the *working/active* people's knowledge and experience in the organisation.

the gallery, and for the purpose of diverting the society's attention from real issues. Let it be remembered that the Oxford University has a history of several centuries; it is one of the longest-lived organisations in the Western World<sup>3</sup>.

UoP is a State University: Unquestionably, as is any other State University, it is *at best second rate*. The question of reaching international standards simply does not arise. A more realistic and honest assessment would most probably rate this University as third- or fourth-rate.

A well-respected scholar from this University, known for his ability for finely-honed understatement, made the following loaded, penetrating observation a few years ago: "This University is *not* an academic institution."

The most disappointing part of the proposed Mission Document is that it fails to even recognise this situation, let alone mention a single fundamental reason for the decline/decay/near-death of our higher education system. See Sec. 2 for an analysis of this decline.

### 1.3 Programme of Action (Part IV)

The *Programme of Action* does talk about the governance, improvements in and indeed establishment of support structure, state-of-the-art facilities, and administrative reforms. While these directions for action are indeed important, we believe, based on our analysis presented in Sec. 2, that the *Programme of Action* addresses symptoms, and not the root cause of the real disease that has plagued this and other State Universities in India.

We, however, do offer a few comments on specific points.

**Major Initiative 1: Establishment of Schools.** Unless it is ensured that each department or discipline has a minimum of about 10 core faculty, a mere reorganisation will not be enough to bring about changes. We note that there are several full-fledged departments running full-fledged M.Sc. programmes with hardly any in-house core faculty.

**Major Initiatives 6 and 7: New Courses and Academic Flexibility.** We whole-heartedly support 5-year integrated Masters programmes, However, there is a caveat: A separate administrative and support structure must be created, headed by a Dean or a Director, and the faculty strength in each such department should be augmented to match the stringent logistic requirements of such programmes.

**Major Initiative 11: Faculty Upgradation.** Our views on the crucial importance of quality of the faculty are amply stated in Sec. 2.

**Major Initiative 12: Faculty Evaluation By the Students.** We whole-heartedly welcome this initiative. In fact, we wish to widen it to include evaluation of the officers of the University at all levels by faculty and students.

**Major Initiative 13: Earn-and-Learn Schemes.** We should recognise that students participating in this scheme are at least graduates. As such, they should be given employment commensurate with their background, training, and skill-set. If anybody is willing to listen, we have several radical-sounding but common-sense suggestions on this.

**Major Initiative 17: Triple Connectivity.** Technology brings with it its own set of problems. In particular, heavy investment in technology necessitates a heavy investment in maintenance, and a heavier investment in upgradation. The costs and logistics of maintenance and upgradation should not be ignored.

---

<sup>3</sup>Edsger W. Dijkstra, *The Strengths of the Academic Enterprise* (1994). Emphasis ours.  
<http://www.cs.utexas.edu/users/EWD/ewd11xx/EWD1175.PDF>

Further, no matter how much state-of-the-art and expensive technologies are deployed, without able and motivated faculty, educational scene is not going to change at all. After all, machines do not create, minds do – if at all.

## 2 Decline of the State University Institution: An Analysis

The decline of this University (in fact, of all State Universities in India) has been going on for the past 15 years or so. Especially during the last 5 years or so, this decline has reached alarming proportions. This decay is now evident in every aspect of this University's operation, including poor quality of academics, high levels of frustration in the people that constitute the University, near-anarchy, non-existent governance, and a highly decadent, arrogant bureaucracy that has forgotten that academics is the primary reason for its very existence. Presently, State Universities are considered a decaying, rotten, decadent, outdated institution beyond salvage. It is most urgent and crucial to do a serious analysis and understand the fundamental reasons for this decline.

**The Great Divide: Institutes vs. Universities.** It is well-known that the University institution in post-independence India was fraught with a second-rate status right at the outset because of the great divide of *Institutes vs. Universities*, strongly advocated and pioneered by Homi J. Bhabha<sup>4</sup>. More recently, as if to continue with Bhabha's elitist vision with even greater gusto, all major Government agencies (including the UGC), instead of strengthening the University system aggressively, seem to have taken an escapist approach evident in their creation of their own private academic empires and show-cases such as the IISER and the IUCs.

**The Role of University Leadership.** The powerful people – our representatives, and people at the helm of the affairs (to whom the Government listens), such as the Vice Chancellors, directors of research institutes, the chairman/s of the UGC and, of course, all the wise people who decorate UGC committees, have never been outspoken on this issue. Management skills and acumen and, in particular, a balanced view of macro- and micro-management, is often seen lacking in the top management of this University. The system just does not respond to the needs of academics, let alone in an intelligent, efficient, and timely manner. There is strife and frustration in the ranks at all levels. General neglect and “why bother?” or “couldn't care less!” attitudes abound. These are not healthy signs for any organisation.

**Absence of the True Participatory Democratic Process Amongst Academicians.** It is futile to blame our academic leadership alone. The Academia in this country have never acted as a pressure lobby and a vigilant force that shaped our education policies from time to time in a proactive manner. Most certainly, even a mechanism of mature debate amongst our Academia and a process of consensus that would lead to a policy framework from time to time for the dynamic evolution our education system did not evolve in this country. This is a sad reflection on the quality, outlook, vigilance, and conscientiousness of teachers employed in State Universities and Colleges. Ideas should ideally spawn at the grassroots level, evolve, and get distilled as they travel upwards in the hierarchy towards the level of policy decision makers. Instead, we have always seen an inverted pyramid structure in this regard.

**Role of the Government and Tyrannical Control by the State.** the Government, on innumerable occasions, has explicitly stated that, due to financial problems education – and especially

---

<sup>4</sup>A critique of this model of academics can be found in a very perceptive article by Sunil Mukhi (The Times of India, Pune Edition, 15 January 2006). This article can be found at the URL <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/SUNDAY.SPECIALS/All.That.Matters/Academic.partnership/articleshow/msid-1372152,curpg-1.cms>. It is interesting to note that Sunil Mukhi, a well-known string theorist, belongs to the very institute, the TIFR, that was founded by Homi J. Bhabha.

higher education – is NOT a priority and the Government wants to get out of it.

The dichotomy in the Government’s attitude is clear: on one hand, they do not want to support higher education and, on the other, they want complete and tight control over Universities exercised via acts, ordinances, etc.

**Ambiguous Role of the UGC and the LCD Syndrome<sup>5</sup>.** The blame for the decline of State Universities also should go squarely to the role played by UGC – or to be precise, the role NOT played by the UGC. Perhaps the root cause of this has something to do with the fact that education happens to be in the purview of the State as well as the Centre – as a consequence, it gets the worst of both the worlds. A case-in-point is the governance of Central Universities, which is far superior to that of State Universities such as the UoP.

Do you know that the eligibility criterion for a lecturer is just a Master’s degree NET/SET certification? This applies even to University departments that endeavour to build creative, cutting-edge research programmes. Such has been the wisdom of UGC – and understandably so: The UGC must take care of some 400-500 universities and some 4000-6000 colleges in the country; it is perhaps compelled to take LCD (Lowest Common Denominator) decisions. No wonder we have LCD universities and LCD academics.

The point we wish to make is that there is hardly any positive role that the UGC could play in improving our University system because, in spite of the fact that it is a well-intentioned Government body, it is overly constrained, and specifically, has not teeth to enforce anything.

**Affiliated Colleges.** The large number of affiliated colleges and, as a consequence, an even larger number of students that a State University has to cater to in this country is a major factor for the stagnation of the State University institution: Too large a size simply inflates the inertia of an organisation or system beyond proportion and reason.

Undergraduate education, especially in the Indian context, is simply too complex an issue. It is preposterous to assume that any one single individual has grasped the nature of its complexity, let alone even glimpses of a solution. It is contradictory to expect a single central authority to manage a huge population of 400+ colleges and, at the same time, expect excellence, cutting-edge research, dynamism, and quality academics. What we need is a lean, efficient structure that is able to respond fast to the changing needs of the society and times. Looking at successful Universities in India and abroad, we estimate that the student population (undergraduate *plus* post-graduate) of any University should not be more than about 30,000 at any given time. Evidently, this estimate presupposes the existence of adequate infrastructure, support structures, governance, and administration.

Having a research culture in undergraduate colleges is a noble goal. However, before expecting that, one should perhaps make honest reality checks on the status of almost everything in the colleges: infrastructure, resources, library, and laboratory facilities, and most important, the quality and motivation of the average teachers, the academic environment and ambiance.

Well, where CHB is the norm tacitly approved and even encouraged by the Government, what are we talking about? Quality education? Motivation in teachers? Building the Nation? But then, unfortunately, the whole CHB mechanism makes economic sense<sup>6</sup>! Remember that the Maharashtra Government itself approved the famous scheme of *Shikshan Sevaks*. Even at this very University we have our own version of such *Shikshan Sevaks* called the Teaching Assistants @8,000 per month, consolidated.

**Excellent Universities are Built by Excellent Minds.** After all, who will disagree with a vision

---

<sup>5</sup>The credit for coining this apt term belongs to Prof. P. V. Panat.

<sup>6</sup>That is, only if we neglect the long-term social costs of sloppiness and a lack of commitment to excellence.

of building a world-class, top-of-the-line institution for higher education and research? World-class universities cannot be created overnight<sup>7</sup> by wishful thinking or vision statements alone; world-class organisations need world-class minds to make them world-class. Specifically,

1. The most crucial prerequisite for building a quality academic institution is the quality of its faculty.
2. An excellent University also needs excellent support staff and support structures.
3. Moreover, an organisation that cannot strike the delicate balance between institutional goals and personal growth of *each* of its individual members – by creating, nurturing, and sustaining an environment that respects human dignity and is conducive to growth and excellence – is most certainly destined to perish.

It is a sad fact that mediocrity is the hallmark of most Indian Universities. It is an unfortunate fact that such mediocrity is tolerated by academicians. Further, mediocrity and tolerance of mediocrity are tacitly encouraged by the politicians.

The total absence of a recognition of this fact in the Mission Document is both unfortunate and disappointing<sup>8</sup>: No matter how much state-of-the-art and expensive technologies are deployed, without able and motivated faculty, educational scene is not going to change at all. After all, machines do not create, minds do – if at all. Most certainly, the faculty must be very carefully selected, nurtured, and given an environment conducive to excellence – only then it is reasonable to expect creativity, innovation, large-scale cutting-edge research.

Let us understand that excellence can neither be guaranteed by mechanical, standardised processes<sup>9</sup>, nor cannot it be measured by any external standards; it is a characteristic of the mind, and a product of the attitude of a person. Excellence at personal and organisational levels requires careful nurturing. Again, to quote John Gardner:

*We must learn to honour excellence in every socially accepted human activity, however humble the activity, and to scorn shoddiness, however exalted the activity. An excellent plumber is infinitely more admirable than an incompetent philosopher. The society which scorns excellence in plumbing because plumbing is a humble activity and tolerates shoddiness in philosophy because it is an exalted activity will have neither good plumbing nor good philosophy. Neither its pipes nor its theories will hold water.*

*John Gardner, Excellence, 1961*

*A society whose maturing consists simply of acquiring more firmly established ways of doing things is headed for the graveyard – even if it learns to do these things with greater and greater skill. In the ever-renewing society what matures is a system or framework within which continuous innovation, renewal and rebirth can occur.*

*John Gardner, Self-Renewal, 1964*

**Municipality Schools for Higher Education?** How long before our State Universities become the Municipality Schools of Higher Education indulged in an endeavour of despicable quality, meant only for the poor who have no other alternative? The elite class of the society already has the alternative of private and/or foreign expensive schools. This scenario is neither futuristic nor unrealistic – just look at the state of primary, secondary, and undergraduate education.

---

<sup>7</sup>One needs to allow at least a couple of centuries, provided everything else is as it should be.

<sup>8</sup>The cursory mention of this issue in *Strategic Vision* (Part III) #15 and #16 is not worthy of a note.

<sup>9</sup>Just as good teaching and quality research cannot be ensured by demanding that a muster be signed everyday.

### 3 Reality Checks for UoP

If you think this whole discussion about decline of State Universities does not apply to UoP, consider the following reality checks:

- *Reality Check 1.* For the past 14 years or so there has been no serious recruitment on the Campus on a truly competitive basis. Who is the culprit? – the State Government, by putting a ban on all new recruitments (at least in Maharashtra, the self-declared Most Progressive State of the Indian Union). We did not hear even a whimper from our academic leadership (read: Vice Chancellors), the national leadership in science and technology who shape India's science policies (e.g., members of PMSACS), chiefs of DST, CSIR, DAE, etc., and especially the UGC, and last but not the least, doyens of our industrial sector.

- *Reality Check 2.* Examine the recruitment and promotion policies of the UoP: A typical Ph.D. in India takes about 4-6 years after his or her M.Sc.<sup>10</sup> After 2-5 years of post-doctoral work, this person is at the age of about 28-30. This is a total of about 6-9 years after his or her M.Sc.

In this University, he or she is offered ONLY FOUR increments over the Rs. 8,000 basic of a Lecturer's position, making his or her aggregate salary in the range of Rs. 16,000 per month. This is not only unfair to the person, it is positively insulting to the person and demeaning an honest academic pursuit.

What does a State University offer in terms of promotion prospects? 8 years for becoming a Reader, and another 8 years for becoming a Professor. What is more, at UoP, even these norms are NOT followed consistently.

What does a State University offer in terms of work environment and quality of life? – The less said the better!

- *Reality Check 3.* At UoP, has anybody even thought of making an in-depth survey and an honest, public analysis of the reasons why competent people, especially on the academic side, happened to get frustrated and leave this University in the past decade or so? We believe that the results would be telling.

- *Reality Check 4.* A whole generation of faculty who shaped the UoP over the past 3 decades will retire in the next 3-5 years. Are we looking forward to the future of UoP as a Ghost University?

- *Reality Check 5.* Two of the supposedly most important components, the students and the faculty, are the ones feel most frustrated and humiliated when they need to interact with the University's administrative and financial infrastructure. This is simply because the administrative and support staff is overworked and overburdened, and their own human dignity is undermined by the system at every possible opportunity. Another crucial factor is that the whole system is overly hierarchical and mono-centric in its power structure: even for trivial decisions, one needs to go almost to the top of the management hierarchy. This results in loss of initiative and entrepreneurship at all levels.

- *Reality Check 6.* No comments are warranted on the state of our administration! Look at the state of affairs at our guest house, common infrastructural elements like canteens, cafeterias housing, security, maintenance and housekeeping, electrical power, recreational facilities, ... – the list is probably endless.

---

<sup>10</sup>Did you know that this is the average time taken for a good Ph.D. in, e.g., Physics or Chemistry?

**Who Is Lured To Academics?** Arguably, people<sup>11</sup> are not enticed by academics if they wish to “make money”, provided their basic financial needs are (a) taken care of in a reasonable fashion, and (b) the University pay structure is not terribly incommensurate with the pay structure in the world outside. An assurance of a decent and simple but quality life, an environment that respects and protects their human dignity and ensures enrichment of their inner life by encouraging unconstrained scholarly pursuits are usually enough as incentives for those who are lured by academics.

The current system at UoP, however, fails on *every one* of these counts, making itself attractive only to (a) those who are either constrained geographically or socially, and (b) those whose high levels of idealism are somehow not dampened by the reality<sup>12</sup>.

**Anybody Cares to Listen to Honest, Sincere Voices?** Those of us – the teachers in this University – who have been in the system for long, have witnessed this decline unfold before our very eyes. We have been thoroughly disturbed by it, and have been voicing our concerns for quite some time now. Alas... our voices have only reached deaf ears so far!

## 4 Rebuilding the University

**Fundamental Problems Need Fundamental Resolutions.** It is obvious that radical and fundamental changes are warranted if State Universities are to flourish again and become meaningful entities. In the context of the UoP, what is necessary is some serious and honest introspection on part of especially the top management. Further, deployment of well-thought-out, innovative corrective measures to ensure the future of UoP will need the willingness and the political will to act in an intelligent, fundamental fashion.

**Government Support.** Let it be stated explicitly that this cannot be done without Government support. If the government, in its great wisdom and (misplaced) priorities, decides to get out of higher education, we are bound to see a two-tier system:

1. First, the State Universities becoming the equivalents of Municipality Schools for Higher Education: a reluctant option for the economically challenged sector of our society that has fewer alternatives to choose from.
2. Second, the rich sector that has all the choices available at their disposal, from elite, private education in India to foreign universities.

People who believe that privatisation of higher education is the panacea for all the ills of the higher education system in India are living in a fool’s paradise. On the other hand, it might as well be that people who advocate privatisation of higher education are the ones to benefit from it immensely, and therefore the present status of higher education must be viewed from the class point-of-view.

**The Key Challenge in the Human Resource Domain.** The University’s ability to attract excellent minds at all levels in the organisation, and creating an ambience conducive to excellence are the key challenges for the UoP.

Again, we invoke John Gardner’s eloquence and a sharp insight that applies to people at all levels and all possible roles in an organisation:

---

<sup>11</sup>That is, honest, sincere, authentic, and competent people whose primary passions are teaching and research.

<sup>12</sup>One of us was squarely advised to join this University “with the firm knowledge that the University system will *not* work.” He realized the aptness and the true depth of this advise soon afterwards.



*When organizations feel they need an infusion of new talent, they look to their recruitment process. But the largest untapped reservoir of talent is in people already recruited but thereafter neglected.*

*The quickest road to renewal is the mining of that untapped resource. Among other things it would solve the problem of maintaining an organization that is responsive to both leaders and the people it serves. Vital people, using their gifts to the full, are naturally responsive. People who have stopped growing, who no longer have confidence in the use of their own powers, build bastions of procedure.*

*John Gardner, US Civil Service Commission Anniversary Speech, 1996*

Well, even the first and obvious part about “looking into the recruitment process” seems neglected in this University!

**Change, Change, and Only Change Can Save the UoP.** It is clear that the UoP has become an unwieldy dinosaur that resisted change for too long, now finds itself in a hostile environment, and the pressures of natural selection have clearly mounted to an extent that needs serious, honest, responsible, and urgent action. Failure to act, on part of the University community and the management, will only result in its extinction.

What is needed is twofolds:

1. A radical and fundamental reorganisation of the entire UoP structure that has its origins in the outdated acts, statutes, and ordinances, and
2. A conscious effort to bring in young, fresh, able, creative, and dedicated minds capable of thinking differently, at all levels in the organisation.

**Small Is Beautiful.** It is most certainly absurd to talk about quality education and excellence when the population under consideration is some 4,00,000+ students across 400+ colleges. How large should be a University for it to be manageable? We propose that no State University should have more than 30,000 student strength and no more than 50 colleges affiliated. Specifically, we need autonomous district campuses and a City University of Pune.

**Administrative Delinking of Campuses and Colleges.** As discussed in Sec. 2, management of mass-scale undergraduate education is a complex issue that needs urgent resolution. It also needs dedicated support structures for its management. We thus propose a complete logical, logistic, organisational, and administrative separation between campus management and management of colleges.

**Complete Autonomy for the Campus.** For a fundamental reorganisation, it is necessary to unshackle the UoP from excessive government control:

1. Academics on the Campus should be governed by the Campus community: we need complete academic and financial autonomy for the UoP campus, together with the establishment of, e.g., the following organisational structures<sup>13</sup>: Campus Academic Council, Campus Management Council, Campus Dean of Research, Campus Dean for Planning and Development, Campus Dean for Student Affairs, Campus Boards of Studies, a separate, proactive unit to nurture and foster innovative and vigorous research headed by the Campus Dean of Research, etc.
2. The Campus should need no permission from the Government for creating or abolishing positions, hire-and-fire policies, new appointments, promotions, and decisions on all academic matters.

---

<sup>13</sup>This is an *indicative*, and not an *exhaustive*, list.

3. We envisage deploying periodic performance evaluation by outside experts and other strict safeguard mechanisms that operate not only in the letter, but in the spirit.

Let us understand that this is radically different from what is accepted today and would require bold policy changes and a proactive leadership.

## 5 Summary and Conclusions

We have identified the key factors that have culminated in the decline of State Universities in India. These are: the unnatural bifurcation of academics into research institutes and teaching universities, education being under the purview of both the Central and State Governments (thereby getting the worst of both the worlds), total control by the State Governments, lack of visionary academic leadership at all levels (local, state, and national), lack of participatory democratic systems and vigilance on part of the Indian academic community, the drag and inertia of the University system because of its unwieldy size, the LCD syndrome, and a consistent and thorough neglect of the human resource at all levels.

We have argued that a fundamental, radical change in the way UoP operates can alone save it from oblivion, resurrect it, and make it flourish in the true spirit of education and academics. For the UoP campus, we have advocated complete autonomy and a release from the excessive control of the State Government.

## Acknowledgements

Collectively, the authors have benefitted immensely from innumerable discussions with innumerable colleagues in this University, past and present, on the academic as well as the administrative side. Our students have also contributed significantly, over the years, to our understanding of the state of this University. Although too many to list here, we take this opportunity to thank them profoundly.