Best Practice: Student Connect and Mentoring System

1. **Title of the Practice**

   Student Connect and Mentoring System

2. **Objectives of the Practice**

   ● To provide a mentoring system for the students which will facilitate the overall development of their personality

   ● To create an informal personal association between mentor and mentee

   ● To provide academic guidance and emotional support to the students

   ● To motivate students to be confident and constructive members of society and good citizens of the nation

   ● To obtain feedback from the students about college initiatives and activities, thus providing a means for constant improvement and improvisation

3. **The Context**

   Student connect is an initiative that is aimed at enhancing the learning atmosphere of the students by providing them with individual guidance and support. Each teacher is designated as a Class coordinator/Mentor and allotted a small group of students whom they guide through personal interactions. The practice gives the students a safe platform to express their thoughts and doubts and obtain guidance and support from their mentors. Students are given academic guidance, career counseling as well as emotional support. Students who face mental health issues are identified and directed to professional counselors. Besides providing support to the students, Student Connect is a medium through which useful data is obtained about the students. Students are made aware about the various activities of the college, and their feedback on the same is taken, so that these initiatives can be constantly improved according to the changing needs of the students.

4. **The Practice**

   This is the sixth year of this practice since its inception in 2015-16. The existing Student Connect program of the college was extended as the mentor-mentee program in line with University Circular to provide a Mentor-Mentee system. A list of class coordinators was made and each of them was allotted a group of mentees. Each mentor created a Whatsapp group of the allotted mentees for ease of communication. The offline Student Connect cards

were converted to online Google forms, which were sent to the students by their respective class coordinators (CC). Each CC conducted two online meetings with the students to know their academic background, interests, aspirations, goals, family background and expectations from the college. In the next semester, another meeting is planned with the students to know their experiences, evaluate their performance and seek feedback for improving the college facilities and functioning.

The role of the mentor includes following the attendance and performance of individual students taking suitable measures to improve these, as and when required. Advanced learners/good performers are encouraged to join ACP and take up projects/internships, while the weak academic performers are instructed to participate in remedial coaching. Students are also encouraged to participate in the Cultural Forum activities in the literary, fine arts and performing arts sections depending on their interest and talent. The questions asked in the Student Connect card reflect the needs of the students in each semester and year. Mentors analyze the feedback and report their findings to the committee, who report the same to the college authorities, so that appropriate action can be taken.

5. **Evidence of Success**

   Student Connect is a continuous process for the student in his/her three years (six-semester) duration in the college. The outcomes of this process can be evaluated both objectively and subjectively. For most students, the academic progression has seen an upward trajectory suggesting better performance every year. Examples of students can be cited wherein the progress has been phenomenal. Students grow in their values and better understanding of the subjects. Quantitative data obtained from the analysis of student feedback was useful and helped us to solve students' issues to some extent.

6. **Problems Encountered and Resources Required**

   The time required to undertake this activity is an important factor for both the mentor and mentee to make the best of this process. With fixed meeting schedules every semester, this factor is taken care of. Collation of quantitative data is often a tedious task for the mentors and better ways to accommodate the same have to be considered. This year the same was done by the committee members.

The Student Connect committee made a presentation to the staff on the feedback received from the students about the online teaching-learning methodologies adopted by the college, as well as about the Student Connect process itself.

Student Connect Staff Presentation.pdf

Student Connect 2020-21 Response Analysis Report.pdf

<u>**Best Practice: Additional Credit Program**</u>

1. Title of the Practice
Additional Credit Program.

2. Objectives of the Practice

Providing an educational experience, to nurture academic, social, emotional and intellectual growth of a diverse group of high achieving students.
The intended outcomes include:
- Development of thinking capacity for all round growth.
- Kindling of a research acumen among curious minds and sharpening analytical skills.
- Sensitized students to concerns of society and local community in which they thrive.

The underlying principles being:
- Module-1: Widen the students' horizons and expose them to various life skills.
- Module-2: Learning by doing, and striving for excellence through scientific rigour.
- Module-3: Gratitude for what we have and service to others for betterment of society.

3. The Context

This year the implementation of the entire ACP course was done online, making the context "virtual" in transfer of knowledge. This year posed a lot of challenges, as the design of the program is such that it is not delivered in one go. Module 1 had to be conducted in 3 phases with only a few lectures being offered during each time frame. Research was also hit as data collection was not possible until everyone learnt the use of ICT and found a way to carry out meaningful research through ICT methodologies. Module 3 was most hit, as service to the community could not be physically arranged due to lockdown. An alternative arrangement of lecture format workshop was made for students to learn ways to make and use natural products, thereby contributing to keep the earth green.

4. The Practice

The uniqueness of the ACP program lies in it's design. Through this course, students of all streams, irrespective of the program they are primarily enrolled in (BA/BCom/BSc) get a chance to study multiple areas that have the potential to contribute to their life skills. They also have an opportunity to grow academically by doing research at the undergraduate level (SY level), which otherwise is not available to them. It's uniqueness also stands out in its groundedness to reality. Students, on the one hand develop wings of knowledge through module1 & 2, and on the other hand are sensitized to problems faced by the society. This helps them remain rooted with gratitude for the opportunities they enjoy.
The program contributes to preparing students for academic as well as social life.

5. Evidence of Success

Success is evaluated in terms of completion of the program. The three modules are evaluated independently.

- Module 1 evaluation is done by 6 teachers, each for their taught portion.
- Module 2 is evaluated by mentor as well as a panel after the research report is submitted.
- Module 3 is supervised both by ACP team as well as the external agency with which students ally for social work.

Only students who clear all the modules successfully are certified.

- Success indicators are also student reflections and feedback during the course as well as later as alumni when they recount the benefits they reaped in life due to their ACP learnings.
- ACP also helps students during placements.
- An exceptional indicator of success is evident when some of the research papers get selected for presentation in seminars and conferences, both Nationally as well as at state, regional or University level.

6. Problems Encountered and Resources Required

No issues were faced in the conduct of Module 1, with respect to resources, as all classes for interdisciplinary lectures could be arranged through the online mode.

The problems encountered this year were more to do with guiding students virtually. Since ACP students are first time researchers, they require a lot of hand holding and spoon feeding to begin with, but this year guidance could only be given virtually. Additionally, many encountered net connectivity issues,

Module 3 was most difficult to conduct due to safety issues related to sending students for community engagement, during Pandemic related lockdown. Module 3 was eventually conducted virtually through workshops on use of natural products for a safer environment.