

Faculty Orientation And Strategic Planning

From Soul-searching to Action-oriented Strategic Planning....

Last year, from 2nd to 4th January 2015, to be precise, the entire faculty members of Salesian College, Sonada and Siliguri undertook a soul-searching pilgrimage to Santiniketan—the abode of peace. Termed as the Faculty Development Programme (FDP), this was an attempt to connect with the spirit, philosophy and humanism of the great visionary and teacher Rabindranath Tagore. It was a kind of individual spiritual search, as a teacher, as a human, as to seek better ways to do justice to our roles in the college and society at large. This year, from 18th to 20th August 2016, about 75 faculty members of both the campuses, embarked upon a truly collective, research-oriented academic exercise at the Sonada Campus. The three day programme titled Faculty Orientation and Strategic Planning (FOSP) was a collective brainstorming and strategic planning exercise for the future. The intention was to take stock of the current situation, and to revise and refine our roles and strategies in a fast changing and globalising world. The programme was organized by the Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) of the College, headed by Fr (Dr) Mathew Pulingathil sdb, also the Rector of the Siliguri Campus. Fr. (Prof) George Thadathil sdb, the Principal of both the campuses, set out the broad framework of the workshop at the inauguration as: "getting to know each other as faculty and management; planning and preparing for NAAC (National Assessment and Accreditation Council) re-accreditation due in September 2017; and the strategic planning as to where Salesian College ought to be in five years from now in terms of expansion and growth". Fr (Dr) James Molekunnel sdb, the Rector of Salesian College Sonada campus, while welcoming the gathering, urged them to take on the task of enhancing their presence and accessibility to the students. The Resource persons for the programme were Mark Pixley, the founder-director of the Leadership Inc. at Shenzhen, China

and Fr. George Thadathil. Mark is a facilitator/consultant dedicated to assisting clients resolve organizational and leadership challenges in organizations. He works with senior managers of the organization to design and facilitate their transition processes. He holds a MBA from New York University and also speaks Mandarin Chinese. Mark used the 'Open Space' strategy of group management, as well as group discussions and presentations, allowing every member to be actively and creatively participate during the entire duration of the workshop. The first day saw the group focussing on their personal as well as institutional success stories, the concerns and frustrations, and the opportunities—again both at the personal and institutional levels. The second day was set aside for addressing the gamut of issues and opportunities concerning Salesian college over the next five years. This included the question of autonomy, curriculum, student support, admission policies, modes of evaluation, research, publications, extension activities, personnel policy, faculty welfare, infrastructure, etc. And on the final day we prepared action-oriented research projects and had their presentations too. The day also saw the groundwork prepared for the NAAC re-accreditation process, due next year, when the college will be going for the third cycle. The summary of the entire proceedings of the programme will be circulated to every participant soon and a follow up workshop for a day is scheduled within six months. Mark Pixley concluded by saying that 'it was incredible to feel this kind of energy and vibrancy among the faculty members, and is deeply encouraging'.

Reported by:

Biju Mathew

Head, Department of Political Science, Siliguri Campus.





