

TOWARDS A TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY RENAISSANCE: THE FUTURE OF BENGAL'S PRESIDENCY UNIVERSITY

Third Report of the Presidency Mentor Group, August 2012

PREAMBLE

One year ago we had submitted our first report with a set of recommendations on how to **reshape Presidency as a center of excellence**. A second report followed in January 2012. **Our aim remains the transformation of Presidency University into a world-class research and teaching institution by the time of its 200th anniversary in 2017.**

Since the submission of our last report excellent progress has been made at Presidency University, especially in recruiting outstanding new faculty members.

All members of the Presidency Mentor Group gathered in Kolkata on July 29 and 30, 2012, for a formal meeting. We reviewed the implementation of our first and second sets of recommendations and formulated a number of new suggestions that are put forth in this concise third report, which should be read together with our more wide-ranging and elaborate first two reports. This report has been given final shape after further consultation among PMG members by phone and email. We trust it will be given the same serious consideration as our two earlier reports.

ACTION TAKEN ON THE FIRST AND SECOND PMG REPORTS

1. Presidency College, now University, is a unique institution with a proud history and tradition of nearly two centuries. We had recommended that Presidency University be regarded in the future as the crown jewel of institutions of higher education in Bengal that will be an example for other institutions to emulate, just as Presidency University too will do its best to learn from the rich academic tradition of Bengal reflected in other distinguished centers of higher education and research in Kolkata and beyond. We are glad to note that the Chief Minister and the Government of West Bengal have accepted the principle that Presidency should be a unique state university with a special status to be nurtured as **a center of excellence**.
2. We had thought it advisable to recruit half a dozen strong academic leaders in the natural sciences, social sciences and the humanities as **Distinguished University Professors**. Following a meeting with the PMG Chairman on January 2, 2012, the Chief Minister personally approved and announced four

- such positions at Presidency University named after iconic figures in the modern history of Bengal on January 4, 2012. These have been described as follows: Acharya Jagadish Chandra Bose Distinguished University Professorship in the Natural Sciences; Kabiguru Rabindranath Tagore Distinguished University Professorship in the Humanities (in the field of literature and cultural studies); Swami Vivekananda Distinguished University Professorship in the Humanities (in the field of philosophy, broadly defined); and Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose Distinguished University Professorship in the Social Sciences (in the fields of economics, history and/or political science). The Chief Minister offered a fifth position named after Kazi Nazrul Islam. We are glad that the Government of West Bengal has accepted our suggestion to define this position to be in the field of Inter-Cultural Dialogue and Peace Studies. The official order sanctioning these positions was received in early July 2012. Searches to fill these positions can now be launched following specific recommendations regarding compensation and process that we give below in the section on recruiting an outstanding and diverse faculty. We strongly urge that two more Distinguished University Professorships in the natural and mathematical sciences be created as soon as possible. This will send the right message about the high priority we attach to achieving excellence in the sciences at Presidency University.
3. In our first report we had underscored the imperative to recruit an outstanding and diverse faculty capable of cutting-edge research and high-quality teaching as the top priority. We recommended that the appointments be made with the help of selection committees consisting of leaders in the various disciplines and fields of study. We are delighted that the state government approved and the university authorities adopted the transparent and rigorous selection process suggested by us. We thank the Vice-Chancellor for drawing on the expertise of the outstanding scholars listed by us on the selection committees as subject experts. Vice-Chancellor Malabika Sarkar deserves our warmest congratulations for conducting a complex faculty recruitment process at the highest level of professional competence. Nearly fifty new faculty members of Presidency University have been selected already – fifteen of them at the full professorial rank – most have accepted and many have joined. At the conclusion of the first round of faculty recruitment in October, we expect more than a hundred high-quality faculty members will have been recruited. **We have every reason to applaud both the process and the outcome of this first round of faculty recruitment.**
 4. In order to attract the best faculty to Presidency as a unique institution and center of excellence, we had emphasized the need to offer compensation including medical and other benefits comparable and commensurate with central and central government funded institutions. The decision of the Chief Minister to create a provision for a guaranteed annual supplement in the form of faculty research and professional development funds – Rs 4 lakh for Distinguished University Professors, Rs 3 lakh for Professors, Rs 2 lakh for Associate Professors, and Rs 1 lakh for Assistant Professors – is an important

- step in the right direction. The offer of moving expenses for faculty relocating from outside West Bengal has sent the right signal about our intention to make Presidency a magnet for talent from across India and the world. Much more will need to be done to compete effectively with institutions in other states and central government funded autonomous institutions, such as, IIM-Kolkata, IIT-Kharagpur and IISER-Kalyani in our own state. We urge the state government to fully implement our recommendations in this regard. Now that we are being successful in recruiting outstanding faculty, our next challenge will be to retain them. We must attract and retain top-notch faculty with proven excellence in research at the international level. In the absence of complete parity with central institutes in regard to salary, allowances, and perquisites, it will be extremely difficult to recruit and retain the very best faculty, especially in the sciences. Presidency urgently needs to upgrade its infrastructure and research facilities. We are aware that other institutions in India have their eyes on the best scholar-teachers we are bringing to Presidency. We commend Vice-Chancellor Malabika Sarkar for arranging transit accommodation for faculty coming from outside Kolkata. In terms of medical benefits, we are glad to note that the university authorities are taking the lead among state universities in creating a cost-effective and high-quality group medical insurance scheme in which the employer will contribute a substantial fraction of the annual premium.
5. As part of dramatically upgrading the academic infrastructure, we had recommended the enhancement of IT capability on campus. Concrete steps have been taken in this direction. We congratulate Vice-Chancellor Malabika Sarkar for taking the initiative to create a new website, that enabled, among other things, candidates to file online applications for faculty positions. A very large number of candidates based in foreign countries were efficiently interviewed via video conference through a new streamlined system.
 6. We had stressed the need for additional space in our earlier reports. We are grateful to the Chief Minister for taking personal interest in the matter. We thank the Government of West Bengal for providing a ten-acre plot at a good location in Rajarhat for Presidency's second campus. We provide detailed recommendations on this topic below in the relevant section of this report.
 7. While several challenges remain and will have to be addressed in the future, the new sense of purpose in rejuvenating Presidency as a center of excellence is encouraging.

A STATE UNIVERSITY WITH A SPECIAL STATUS

[Terms of Reference No. 11: To explore whether Presidency should continue to be a State university or seek the status of a Central university or aspire to be counted as one among the new innovation universities.]

In light of the measures taken by the Chief Minister along with the Education and Finance Departments, we reiterate that our first preference is to allow Presidency

University to flourish as a state university with a special status with due acknowledgement of its unique heritage. This should not prevent Presidency from seeking additional financial support from the central government, whether from the University Grants Commission, the Planning Commission for the 12th plan period, or a one-time special budgetary allocation from the central government as described in our first report. We are disappointed to note that no follow-up action was taken on a proposal from the Vice-Chancellor specifically sought by the Principal Secretary, Higher Education, in January 2012 for an allocation in the range of Rs 200 crore for Presidency University. This needs to be rectified. We need clarity from the state government on the extent to which it will be able to support the infrastructure development needs of Presidency Universities between now and the 200th anniversary in January 2017. This will enable the drawing up of proposals to seek supplementary special project funding from the central government and private sources.

AN OUTSTANDING AND DIVERSE FACULTY

[Terms of Reference No. 4: To define search procedures and the constitution of search committees to make the best faculty appointments at the levels of professor, associate professor and assistant professor in order to create an outstanding and diverse faculty.]

We had stated in our first report that the first 100 faculty appointments will be of critical importance in shaping the future of Presidency University. We are very pleased that the recommendations in our first and second reports about the recruitment process and the composition of selection committees were taken on board in designing the faculty recruitment drive that has taken place during 2012. **With fifty excellent appointments already made, we fully expect more than a hundred outstanding new faculty members to have been selected by the time the first round of recruitment concludes in October 2012.**

The following sentences in our second report bear repetition as part of the mission statement of the new Presidency: “We envisage Presidency University as a path-breaking institution of higher learning that will have a judicious balance and synergy between research and teaching. Presidency must be a place where the faculty will carry out first-rate research at the level of top institutions in India and, in time, the leading institutions in the world. The faculty should be encouraged to offer research-based teaching and inspire students to undertake research.”

Advertisements for some 184 faculty positions issued in January and February 2012 yielded well over 5000 applications, making it a gigantic exercise that was skillfully conducted by Vice-Chancellor Malabika Sarkar with a skeletal staff. We are glad that very high standards of excellence have been maintained in making the first round of faculty appointments.

We had recommended that in addition to excellence due attention needs to be paid to the question of diversity. We are happy to note that very good appointments have been made at the assistant professor level in the scheduled tribes, scheduled castes, and other backward classes reserved categories. Attention also needs to be paid to under-represented minorities and the maintenance of a healthy gender balance on the faculty.

The same selection committees for the new appointments evaluated current Presidency College teachers and others in the education service wishing to opt in, several of whom have been selected as Presidency University faculty. In consultation with the Vice-Chancellor, the Higher Education Department should now arrange the orderly and dignified transfer of teachers who opted out or were not selected. Typically, these transfers to government colleges should be made at the end of a teaching semester. Sanction should be given immediately to fill the positions that will fall vacant as a result of these transfers.

During the first round of faculty recruitment we chose to go for the very best candidates available in each discipline without specifying specializations within disciplines. **It may be necessary in the second round to indicate preferences for particular specializations in order to build balanced departments with adequate coverage of essential fields of knowledge. This does not preclude any deliberate decision to excel in certain sub-fields by creating a genuine depth of faculty expertise in those areas.**

The time has come to proceed with the search for the Distinguished University Professorships as exceptional scholars occupying these positions will be able to provide academic leadership in the various branches of learning. While we are grateful to the Government of West Bengal for generously providing funds for these positions, these are not quite sufficient for the scholars of real stature that we wish to attract to Presidency. As a matter of principle, the salary scales for these distinguished academic positions should be delinked from the grades and ranks of the higher bureaucracy. We understand the constraint that the basic salary of the Distinguished University Professors cannot be more than the basic salary of the Vice-Chancellor. However, the total compensation should be at the same level with the best available in India for similar positions in central institutes. Presidency University should supplement the funds provided by the government from its own resources. **We recommend that the initial total compensation for the Distinguished University Professors should be at least Rs 160,000 (Rupees One Lakh Sixty Thousand) per month with a provision of annual increments at a rate of 5% to 7%.**

Announcements seeking nominations and applications for the five Distinguished University Professorships should be published in the *Times Higher Education Supplement* and the *Chronicle of Higher Education* as well as in national newspapers. In addition, an announcement of the Jagadish Chandra Bose Distinguished University Professorship ought to appear in *Science and Nature*. The Vice-Chancellor should appoint and chair five high-

level Search Committees, each with a membership of three senior and eminent scholars in the relevant branches of learning.

The announcements for the five Distinguished University Professorships may read as follows:

1. Presidency University seeks nominations and applications for the Acharya Jagadish Chandra Bose Distinguished University Professorship in the Natural Sciences. Candidates may be theoreticians or experimental scientists in the disciplines of physics, chemistry, mathematics, and the life sciences or cutting-edge inter-disciplinary scholars in these fields. A very strong publication record in international refereed journals is required. A distinguished scholar with at least twelve years of teaching and/or research experience who has acquired national recognition and international stature based on her/his academic contribution to the philosophy of the subject will be selected on the recommendation of a Search Committee of senior and eminent scholars specially appointed to review the candidates' work and lifetime achievements. Letters of nomination and expressions of interest should be sent to Vice-Chancellor Malabika Sarkar, Presidency University, 86/1 College Street, Kolkata 700073, India (Email: vc@presiuniv.ac.in).
2. Presidency University seeks nominations and applications for the Kabiguru Rabindranath Tagore Distinguished University Professorship in the Humanities. Candidates may be discipline-based or inter-disciplinary scholars in the fields of literature and cultural studies. A very strong publication record with at least two books published by reputable academic presses and articles in international refereed journals is required. A distinguished scholar with at least twelve years of teaching and/or research experience who has acquired national recognition and international stature based on her/his academic contribution to the philosophy of the subject will be selected on the recommendation of a Search Committee of senior and eminent scholars specially appointed to review the candidates' work and lifetime achievements. Letters of nomination and expressions of interest should be sent to Vice-Chancellor Malabika Sarkar, Presidency University, 86/1 College Street, Kolkata 700073, India (Email: vc@presiuniv.ac.in).
3. Presidency University seeks nominations and applications for the Swami Vivekananda Distinguished University Professorship in the Humanities. Candidates may be discipline-based or inter-disciplinary scholars in the field of philosophy, broadly defined. A very strong publication record with at least two books published by reputable academic presses and articles in international refereed journals is required. A distinguished scholar with at least twelve years of teaching and/or research experience who has acquired national recognition and international stature based on her/his academic contribution to the philosophy of the subject will be selected on the recommendation of a Search Committee of senior and eminent scholars specially appointed to review the candidates' work and lifetime achievements. Letters of nomination and expressions of interest should be

- sent to Vice-Chancellor Malabika Sarkar, Presidency University, 86/1 College Street, Kolkata 700073, India (Email: vc@presiuniv.ac.in).
4. Presidency University seeks nominations and applications for the Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose Distinguished University Professorship in the Social Sciences. Candidates may be discipline-based or inter-disciplinary scholars in the fields of Economics, History and/or Political Science. A very strong publication record is required. Historians and political scientists should have at least two books published by reputable academic presses and articles in international refereed journals. Economists should have articles in the top international refereed journals. A distinguished scholar with at least twelve years of teaching and/or research experience who has acquired national recognition and international stature based on her/his academic contribution to the philosophy of the subject will be selected on the recommendation of a Search Committee of senior and eminent scholars specially appointed to review the candidates' work and lifetime achievements. Letters of nomination and expressions of interest should be sent to Vice-Chancellor Malabika Sarkar, Presidency University, 86/1 College Street, Kolkata 700073, India (Email: vc@presiuniv.ac.in).
 5. Presidency University seeks nominations and applications for the Kazi Nazrul Islam Distinguished University Professorship in Inter-Cultural and Peace Studies. Candidates may be discipline-based or inter-disciplinary scholars in the humanities or the social sciences. A very strong publication record with at least two books published by reputable academic presses and articles in international refereed journals is required. A distinguished scholar with at least twelve years of teaching and/or research experience who has acquired national recognition and international stature based on her/his academic contribution to the philosophy of the subject will be selected on the recommendation of a Search Committee of senior and eminent scholars specially appointed to review the candidates' work and lifetime achievements. Letters of nomination and expressions of interest should be sent to Vice-Chancellor Malabika Sarkar, Presidency University, 86/1 College Street, Kolkata 700073, India (Email: vc@presiuniv.ac.in).

We further recommend that 15 of the currently sanctioned full Professorships be made available for re-designation as department-based Heritage Chaired Professorships with salary levels higher than the full Professorships and lower than the Distinguished University Professorships. This will enable Presidency to recruit and retain senior scholars of great merit who have shown or are displaying interest in joining the Presidency faculty. Very high standards should be applied for promotion to these department-based Heritage Chaired Professorships. Top-up funds allocated by the state government for this purpose will be utilized only when exceptional scholars are available to fill these posts with some attention paid to inter-departmental balance.

We reaffirm our hope that the search and selection procedure outlined in our first two reports and this one will give way to the normal rules of university autonomy and faculty self-governance by 2017. Once a critical mass of excellent faculty has been assembled at Presidency University, they will take a leading role in recruiting their colleagues with the help of outside experts. In all well-established, reputable universities in the world, a fine faculty usually knows how to replenish and augment itself.

Now that the picture of the yield from the first round of the permanent faculty recruitment process has emerged, Presidency University should move swiftly to invite very capable guest faculty through contractual appointments for fixed terms as described in our first report.

VISITING PROFESSORS

[Terms of Reference No. 15: To create a provision for short courses to be taught by distinguished scholars based in other parts of the world as visiting professors.]

There is great interest among scholars based in different parts of the world to teach short courses at Presidency. We understand recruitment of a permanent faculty had to be the first priority. It would be good to invite a few visiting professors to teach in January 2013 and in July and August 2013 or other times convenient for both the university and the visitors.

A TALENTED AND DIVERSE STUDENT BODY

[Terms of Reference No. 5: To refine and streamline the admissions process in order to recruit the most talented students from all sections of society and the process for awarding scholarships and providing financial aid on the basis of merit and need.]

We reaffirm the principles that ought to undergird the students admissions process at Presidency were outlined in our first report – outreach to schools in many regions, undergraduate admissions tests of a high standard, open competition among graduates from all universities for post-graduate admissions, and due attention to diversity on the student body.

We are concerned to read media reports about a common admissions test for post-graduate admission to all state universities. It is not clear what precisely the Higher Education Council has in mind. If such a test is meant to be similar to the GRE in the United States and its scores taken to be just one of many criteria to be considered in the admissions process, then it may well be acceptable. However, over-centralization of post-graduate admissions across universities should be avoided. Every university should have autonomy in determining its admissions process and deciding on its admissions list.

Presidency University as a unique institution and center of excellence must be free to have its own admissions tests and interviews.

DEPARTMENTAL REORGANIZATION AND INTERDISCIPLINARY INITIATIVES

[Terms of Reference No. 6: To suggest innovative and efficient ways of organizing Departments and Schools of the University enabling both disciplinary and inter-disciplinary appointments and courses of study.]

The initial faculty recruitments at Presidency University have followed the preexisting disciplines such as Botany, Physiology, Zoology, Biochemistry, Biotechnology and Bioinformatics. However, in the 21st century, Biological Sciences have become highly interlinked, and we envision that Presidency University will benefit from the integration of these different departments and centers in to a single 'Department of Life Sciences'. We recommend that the current and future faculty recruitment processes take place in the context of such a unified department. Since some of the best science is taking place at the points of intersection of various disciplines, Presidency needs to have a flexible organizational structure to promote research and teaching in these fields.

We are pleased to note that theoretical computer science will form a new stream in a revamped Mathematics Department. A focus on linguistics, complexity theory and algorithms, neglected in other Indian institutions, may enable Presidency to quickly emerge as a leader in this area.

The decision to encompass social and cultural anthropology in the current faculty recruitment process for the Department of Sociology is encouraging. The department should be renamed the Department of Social Anthropology and Sociology.

We reaffirm our recommendation that the departments be structured under two Faculties – the Faculty of Natural and Mathematical Sciences and the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities – each with a Dean. We continue to encourage two or three University-wide research initiatives and the future establishment of a School of Public Policy.

AN INTELLECTUALLY EXCITING CURRICULUM

[Terms of Reference No. 7: To propose a curricular structure and an intellectually exciting curriculum with a balance of lecture courses, seminars and tutorials and to provide detailed guidelines for innovative syllabi in the natural sciences, social sciences, humanities and the arts.]

We refer the reader to our second report that dealt in detail with this topic. We continue to suggest the elimination of the current distinction between honors and pass courses and to give students the flexibility to change their honors subject based on aptitude and performance at the end of the first year. Students should not have to follow an arbitrary, regimented schedule over three years, even though the number of courses to be taken to fulfill the honors requirement may remain the same.

As the PMG we are simply suggesting the need for Presidency University to return to its original vision of being an institution imparting a genuine liberal arts education, especially in the undergraduate college. We are limiting ourselves to prescribing a broad structure for the curriculum, leaving the faculty with a great deal of autonomy to fashion their own courses. We hope that our recommendation for curricular reform can be put into place for the incoming class of July 2013. For this to happen, the Vice-Chancellor may wish to appoint a faculty curriculum committee of seven members and invite a Professor of her choice to chair such a committee.

We had mentioned in our second report that our vision for Presidency would be easier to implement if we had a four-year bachelors' degree. However, cognizant of the cost implications of such a move, we had been somewhat tentative about making that recommendation. We had noted that Presidency could be a trail-blazer in pursuing a 12 (school) plus 4 (bachelors) and then doctoral program with the masters being an exit option after graduate-level coursework for those not continuing with doctoral dissertation research. Having deliberated further on these important issues at our July 2012 meeting, we are convinced that Presidency should take the lead in discussions about a four-year bachelors' degree that has been mooted by the central government. Since a Masters' degree is still a requirement for a University job under UGC rules, such a degree can be awarded on the way to a Ph.D. and not just as an exit option.

THE UNDERGRADUATE COLLEGE AND GRADUATE STUDIES

[Terms of Reference No. 8: To define the relationship between the undergraduate College and the post-graduate Departments and Schools.]

We wish to build on our earlier recommendations to devise a synergistic relationship between undergraduate and graduate studies, including the employment of post-graduate students as teaching assistants or fellows in undergraduate courses. We have now recruited a number of faculty members with a high research profile who will wish to have doctoral students of their own. As we begin to build small, but high-quality, Ph.D. programs in different fields, it will be necessary to make provision for a number of multi-year research studentships to support doctoral students.

THE ACADEMIC CALENDAR

[Terms of Reference No. 9: To devise the most suitable academic calendar and consider whether to adopt a semester-system or year-long courses.]

We once again recommend the introduction of an intensive monsoon semester in July and August in partial overlap of the regular first semester and a winter semester in January in partial overlap of the regular second semester in order to introduce short courses by visiting professors from different parts of the world. They may also be invited at other convenient times of the academic year.

AN EFFICIENT AND ATTRACTIVE ACADEMIC INFRASTRUCTURE

[Terms of Reference No. 10: To suggest ways of making rich library resources available to faculty and students, building laboratories for scientific research, and equipping the campus with state-of-the-art information technology.]

In our two earlier reports we have already made several concrete recommendations regarding space and infrastructure in the old historic College Street campus. Land for the second campus was made available after the submission of our second report. It is a square 10-acre corner plot at a very good location in Rajarhat behind the HIDCO building (see attached map). In this report, therefore, we focus on the building of the second campus and on how we envision the links between the two campuses.

While we are very pleased with the land for the second campus, the physical distance between the two campuses poses certain challenges in planning for the future. Once the East-West metro has been completed, it should be possible to travel relatively quickly from College Street to Rajarhat. At full strength by January 2017 Presidency University is likely to have about 5000 students and 340 faculty members. Ideally, we would like to see most undergraduate instruction in the form of lectures and seminars to be concentrated in one location. This is of the essence, since we do not want to separate the sciences and the humanities at the undergraduate level and would like to see students from both streams mingle inside and outside the classrooms. We suggest that undergraduate instruction be organized in the old historic College Street campus, at least to begin with. In any case, it will take some time to build the second campus. We recognize that the Presidency University faculty should be consulted on space and campus planning. Since the first round of faculty recruitment is likely to be completed in October 2012, the PMG would like to hold an interactive session with the new faculty members at the time of our next meeting in December 2012. If the Vice-Chancellor wishes to nominate a few faculty representatives to liaise with us on the space issue, we would welcome that too. In early 2013 each department may be invited to submit proposals as to which of their activities they might wish to locate in the new campus. A space allocation committee can then

review these proposals and take decisions regarding the precise layout of the academic zone in the new campus.

Our current thinking is that state-of-the-art new scientific laboratories and facilities should be built in the second campus. In addition to labs, the academic zone of the second campus should have space for classrooms and stand-alone professional schools. It should definitely have residences for faculty, a guest house, hostels for post-graduate students and perhaps some undergraduates as well, a Vice-Chancellor's Lodge, and an international conference center.

We envision the recreation of the College Street atmosphere in one quarter of the second campus, albeit without the clanking and clattering of trams and other vehicular traffic. This would be a pedestrian zone with lively and well-designed cafes and bookshops. We would like this part of the campus to be open to the public. The other parts where academic facilities and residences are located will be private and more secure. We had invited the architect Partha Ranjan Das to be present during our brain storming about the second campus. He has very generously converted our dreams into drawings, which are attached to this report. The envelope drawings are simply preliminary visualizations of what the second campus might look like and will require much more time to finalize after proper consultation among all stakeholders. We estimate it will cost approximately Rs 400 crore to build the second campus over four years so that it is fully constructed and operational by the time of the bicentennial in January 2017.

Meanwhile, the infrastructure on College Street needs to be upgraded swiftly for the incoming faculty. Of the three heritage buildings – the Main Building, the Baker Building and the Eden Hindu Hostel Building – in the old campus, it will be the centenary of the Baker Lab next year. It needs thorough repair and refurbishment not just for historical reasons: it urgently needs upgrading to attract and retain outstanding scientists at Presidency in the future. We attach a visualization of our infrastructure development plans for the old campus described in our second report, including a slim, tall, high-arched, iconic Bicentenary Building; one more building near Bhabani Dutta Lane; one floor above Baker to serve initially as swing space; and additions to and renovation of the Eden Hindu Hostel with a recommendation to lose the “Hindu” tag in its new incarnation.

A CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

[Terms of Reference No. 12: To establish a University development office and recommend a process to vet private gifts for endowed chairs, research funds, fellowships, scholarships, and physical infrastructure that might augment government funding and grants.]

We strongly recommend engaging a professional and experienced fund-raiser, perhaps on a commission basis, to build a corpus and mobilize resources for current use. A clear scaled set of gift opportunities need to be defined for private donors who may wish to give for buildings as well as named chairs, fellowships, etc. We need a comprehensive database of Presidency alumni worldwide who should be approached for gifts to their alma mater. Prominent local and international alumni with corporate connections must be invited to join the Presidency University reconstruction effort and encouraged to bring in large donations.

COOPERATION WITH OTHER UNIVERSITIES

[Terms of reference No. 13: To suggest cross-registration agreements with other universities and colleges and partnerships or exchanges with other research institutes in West Bengal and India.]

We had outlined possible cooperative arrangements with other institutions in our earlier reports. **Given the historical ties between Presidency College and Sanskrit College since the nineteenth century, we had recommended exploring mechanisms of recreating a special relationship between Presidency University and Sanskrit College, possibly as an affiliated college, in order to strengthen the study of Sanskrit as well as the classical and modern humanities. We now wish to place special emphasis on this recommendation. Its implementation will resuscitate Sanskrit College and pave the way for the building of an outstanding Humanities Center under the auspices of Presidency University.**

INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

[Terms of reference No. 14: To help create international partnerships and exchanges with select, outstanding colleges and universities in other parts of the world.]

We once more endorse the Vice-Chancellor's efforts to establish strategic partnerships with a few leading foreign universities in various fields. We need to look both east and west in forging these relationships and be highly selective in signing any MoUs.

THE GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

[Terms of Reference No. 1: To craft an appropriate governance structure for Presidency University enabling its most distinguished alumni to play a positive role in restoring it to a position of academic excellence.]

We gave considerable thought to the question of an appropriate governance structure for Presidency at our July 2012 meeting. There is now considerable research to suggest that distinguished alumni play a key role in the governance structures of the world's leading universities.¹ We need not imitate the best practices of these universities, but rather adopt their basic principles while modifying the structures to suit Indian conditions, especially the particular requirements of Presidency University. For a unitary university of the size of Presidency University, we continue to believe one Governing Board rather than a Court and a Council may provide a more efficient and streamlined system of governance.

We recommend that the composition of the Governing Board should be as follows. The Chancellor or, in his absence, the Vice-Chancellor should chair the meetings of the Governing Board. Ex-officio representatives drawn from government functionaries should be kept to the bare minimum and should not exceed a maximum of three such members. There should be a judicious balance between faculty representatives and nominated members who should be eminent scholars or distinguished alumni. We suggest a maximum of nine faculty representatives: the two Deans of the Faculty of Natural and Mathematical Sciences and the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences; three Heads of Departments by rotation for one year in alphabetical order to be selected by the Vice-Chancellor; two teachers from the Faculty of Natural and Mathematical Sciences elected by the teachers of the Faculty of whom at least one shall be a Professor; and two teachers from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences elected by the teachers of the Faculty of whom at least one shall be a Professor. We suggest a maximum of nine members who are eminent scholars or distinguished alumni, but not employed by the University: two members to be nominated by the Chancellor from amongst eminent scholars or distinguished alumni interested in University education of whom at least one shall be an alumnus of Presidency College/University; three members to be nominated by the State Government from amongst eminent scholars or distinguished alumni interested in University education of whom at least two shall be alumni of Presidency College/University; and four members to be nominated by the outgoing Council/Governing Board of whom at least two shall be eminent scholars and at least two shall be distinguished alumni of Presidency College/University.

THE PRESIDENCY UNIVERSITY ACT

[Terms of Reference No. 2: To propose amendments to the Presidency University Act, as necessary, to facilitate achieving its goals of excellence and equity.]

¹ See, for example, Shailendra Raj Mehta, "Why is Harvard # 1? Governance and the Dominance of US Universities", IIM Ahmedabad Working Paper, April 5, 2012.

If the state government intends to amend the Presidency University Act, we recommend that this be done in the next session of the Assembly. This is important because the statutes of Presidency University will have to be drawn up in consonance with the provisions of the Act. We recommend once more introduction of appropriate language in the preamble stating the intention to develop Presidency University as a center of excellence based on its unique history and distinctive academic tradition. One Governing Board may replace the Court and Council and the composition of the Governing Board may be defined along the lines suggested in the previous section. The transitory provisions of the Act need to stay in place until the appointed day.

STATUTES AND UNIVERSITY OFFICERS

[Terms of Reference No. 1: To revise and frame Statutes of the University as they relate to its governance structure, the process of appointing the Vice-Chancellor and other officers of the University, and the conduct of academic affairs.]

Once the legislature has passed the amendments the government wishes to make to the Act, the PMG members stand ready to participate as members of the PU Council to help frame the first statutes. **Based on the current pace of recruitment of a critical mass of Presidency University faculty and the time required to draw up the statutes, we recommend setting as our goal the first day of classes in the academic year beginning in July 2013 to be the appointed day. In order to achieve this goal, the statutes must be ready by June 30, 2013.**

Vice-Chancellor Malabika Sarkar has been highly successful in her leadership role since her appointment in October, 2011. We need continuity and stability at Presidency as we progress towards the appointed day. On the advice of Professor Amartya Sen, we respectfully request the Chancellor in consultation with the Education Minister to extend her term for a second year under the provisions of Section 55 (4) of the Presidency University Act.

We further request the state government to sanction the supporting officers and staff she needs for the efficient functioning of the University. There is an acute shortage of non-teaching staff at Presidency because its status has changed so recently from College to University. The Vice-Chancellor requires deputy registrars, assistant registrars, a university engineer and an engineering department, four officers in an IT services department and other essential staff on an urgent basis.

CONCLUSION

The Presidency Mentor Group warmly appreciates the progress of the faculty recruitment process. Members of the Group will remain in touch with one another and the Chairperson will maintain regular contact with the Vice-Chancellor and

leaders of the state government over the next few months. The Chairperson wishes to record his deep gratitude to Professor Amartya Sen for his sage advice on all matters and for his careful reading of the draft of this report. The Presidency Mentor Group will have a formal meeting in December 2012 and submit a fourth report in January 2013 containing further observations and recommendations.

Acknowledgements

The Presidency Mentor Group congratulates Professor Malabika Sarkar, Vice-Chancellor of Presidency University, for her leadership in rejuvenating Presidency and thanks her for her gracious hospitality in Kolkata. We are also grateful to the Professor Prabir Dasgupta, Registrar, for facilitating our visits to the campus. Mr Anirban Chakrabarti in the Vice-Chancellor's office has been exemplary in providing logistical support for our meetings as well as the faculty recruitment process.

We are grateful to Shrimati Mamata Banerjee, Hon'ble Chief Minister, for the courtesy extended to the Chairperson and her swift decisions regarding land for the second campus, the Distinguished University Professorships and the guaranteed annual supplements for faculty in the form of research and professional development funds as well as moving expenses for faculty from outside West Bengal. We thank Shri Amit Mitra, Finance Minister, for providing financial sanction for the above in record time and Shri Bratya Basu, Education Minister, for his energy and enthusiasm in supporting our cause. Professor Sugata Marjit, head of the Higher Education Council, has joined in helpful discussions with the PMG Chairperson. Shri Satish Tewary, Principal Secretary, Higher Education, has been receptive to new ideas and out-of-the-box thinking, not always an easy exercise for the bureaucracy. Shrimati Madhumita Roy, Joint Secretary, has been helping in the implementation of our plans for Presidency University.

We thank Shri Partha Ranjan Das, architect, for his expert opinion on space and architecture and for his drawings. Above all, we are immensely grateful to the distinguished scholars in various disciplines who have spent long hours over several days interviewing candidates and selecting excellent scholar-teachers for Presidency University. Their help with our search and selection process has been invaluable and they have our most profound appreciation for their efforts.

We welcome the broad public interest and support of our endeavor. Hindu College began its journey nearly two centuries ago as a collective citizens' initiative. The same spirit of service is required to rebuild Presidency University as a unique center of excellence in India and a world-class institution by its bicentennial in January 2017.

Sugata Bose (Chair), Isher Judge Ahluwalia, Abhijit Banerjee, Sabyasachi Bhattacharya, Swapan Chakravorty, Nayanjot Lahiri, Rahul Mukerjee, Himadri Pakrasi, Ashoke Sen

