PanIIT Alumni, India

(Registration No. S-56680 of 2006 with the Registrar of Societies, Delhi)

India

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April 25, 2012

Shri. Kapil Sibal
Hon'ble Minister for Human Resources Development,
Shastri Bhawan, Dr. Rajendra Prasad Road,
New Delhi- 110001

Sub: PanIIT Alumni viewpoint on Proposed Changes to Engineering Admission Process

Dear Sir,

We , Pan IIT Alumni India wish to place before you our collective view on the subject for your consideration .

The Ramasami Committee has recommended a restructured admission process for admissions to engineering institutions including NITs and IITs.

These recommendations are being debated amongst various stakeholders. Many stakeholders feel that the proposed changes will have very deep negative impact on the excellence of the IIT system. Many of us passionate IITians feel that the proposed changes to the selection process will have far reaching undesirable impact on the IIT ecosystem and the IIT brand.

A discussion forum was organized by PanIIT India Alumni on 14th April 2012 at I.I.T.Delhi . The Forum comprised of a panel discussion followed by an interactive session with alumni who attended the event and was webcast live to all IIT Alumni . Panelists were Prof. Indiresan, former IIT Director ; Arjun Malhotra, distinguished alumnus of of IIT Kharagpur and Pan IIT Alumni global co-chair ; Hari Padmanabhan , Chairman Pan IIT alumni india and Prof. Atul Mittal, President of the All India IIT Faculty federation. The event was moderated by Pradeep Gupta , distinguished alumnus of IIT Delhi and Past President of PIAI.

We give below a summary of our collective view based on the outcome of the discussion and inputs gathered from our alumni community :

A.   Welcome Discussions for Change

In an ever changing environment nothing is constant. We welcome the discussion on changes to be made in engineering admission process. We also appreciate the need to reduce the stress and burden on aspiring students who have to appear for multiple examinations for admission to engineering colleges in the country.

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B. IIT Senates should decide about changes in JEE

We welcome appointment of expert committees to study current systems, analyse and suggest the changes that should be brought about.
However we strongly believe that the autonomy to IIT Senate, as provided in the IIT Act , to decide on all academic matters including selection of students needs to be respected and the Senates should decide and define the process for selecting students.

During the discussions, several suggestions were made regarding selection procedures. Aptitude test, some points to be given for achievements in other fields (such as music, sports, etc.), interview, etc. were suggested. However it would be best left to the Senate of different IITs to consider these.

C. JEE should continue to be conducted by IITs

The success of IITs globally has been due to the fact that it created a true meritocracy. The JEE played a major role in building and sustaining IIT's excellence as an educational system. We therefore strongly feel that the JEE should continue to be conducted by the IIT system.

JEE conducted by IITs is a very established and well tested system. It has also not remained static over time. The JEE has been continuously improved by the IIT system itself. Being autonomous institutions they have well established mechanisms of identifying mprovements, discussing and approving them in their academic affairs senates and implementing them.

The IIT system has also demonstrated a fair and just examination process and has handled large number of candidates for the entrance examinations. To give an example, GATE admission process this year handled about 12 L candidates and the recently concluded IIT JEE examination was taken by more than 5 Lakh students.

D. Statistical models are insufficient to reflect ground reality

School performance, if it is to be included in the selection process at all , could be considered as a qualifying score and not as a weighted normalized score for arriving at the admissions merit list.

Any model developed to normalize scores will intrinsically have limitations and by design, is incapable of creating a level playing field. We therefore do not believe that a statistical model can be developed for normalizing scores across school boards, which can truly bring scores across boards on par. Further it should be left

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to the respective educational institution to decide how they should consider the school performance in the admission criteria .

E. <u>Sufficient notice must be given for implementing Changes</u>

Further , before an implementation date for a change is announced, sufficient notice needs to be given to all stakeholders for adjusting and adapting to the change.

We strongly feel that at least two years notice should be given for implementing change, after all the preparations have been done , such as – change in process, establishing suitable structures for managing the changed examination process, development/ testing of technology infrastructure required, etc.

This would also be fair to aspirants who have begun their preparations, more than two years ago. For example, they are already preparing for the current mode admissions to IIT that has 100% weightage for JEE and has no weightage for 10th class marks. It would be too late for them to know that 10th class marks are now part of selection process.

We would be glad to make a presentation to IIT Council on this subject and apprise them of the opinion of the PanIIT alumni community .
We are confident that the IIT Council would take a decision which upholds the autonomy of institutions whose alumni have made outstanding contributions in all walks of life in India and across the globe .

Thanking you,

Yours Sincerely,

Hari Padmanabhan,
Chairman,

CC:

1. Directors, Chairmen of BOG, Senates of all IITs
2. Special Secretary (Higher education), Min of HRD
3. President of Alumni Association of all IITs
4. PanIIT Alumni organizations

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