



OFFICE OF THE REGISTRAR UNIVERSITY OF OKARA

A Public Sector University Established Under Government of the Punjab Act XIII of 2016

<http://www.uo.edu.pk>

July 09, 2020

NOTIFICATION:

No. UO/DRA/2020/01. As per the recommendations of the Fact Finding Committee, constituted vide notification UO/ADDL.REGg/2020/2126, the following faculty members are being put under observation for a period of one year, starting from the date of issuance of this notification.

1. Dr. Khalid Saleem (Associate Professor, Education)
2. Dr. Tahir Khan Farooqi (Associate Professor, Education)
3. Dr. Shehzad Ahmed (Assistant Professor, Education)

The mechanism for the monitoring of the conduct of the above mentioned faculty members with regard to the complaint of Dr. Nasrin Akhtar will be notified subsequently.

This notification is being issued with the approval of the Competent Authority.

(Sharjeel Ahmed)
Deputy Registrar (Academics)

No. & Date Even:

Copy for information and necessary action to the:

1. Secretary to the Vice Chancellor, University of Okara
2. All Members of the Fact Finding Committee
3. Officers Concerned
4. Office File


(Sharjeel Ahmed)
Deputy Registrar (Academics)



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CONFIDENTIAL

No. UO/Addl. Reg(IMP)/2020/359
June 28, 2020

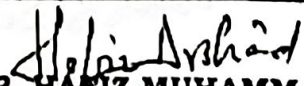
Subject: **RECONSTITUTION OF FACT FINDING COMMITTEE CONSTITUTED VIDE NOTIFICATION NO. UO/ADDL-REG/2020/2126**

With reference to the subject cited above.

Dr. Riaz Ul Amin Convener of the Fact Finding Committee has submitted that he earned his PhD from University of Glasgow and the complainant is also an alumnus of the same University. Within this context, Dr. Riaz has requested that, in the interest of justice, he may be recused from the role of convener of the Committee to avoid any conflict of interest.

In order to maintain the highest standards of justice and impartiality, the Competent Authority has accepted the request of Dr. Riaz and is pleased to appoint Dr. Ghulam Mustafa, Associate Professor of this University as Convener of the Committee in place of Dr. Raiz ul Amin. Except this change, the constitution of the committee and its TORs will remain the same. The composition of the Committee after the above-said change is as under;

SR. NO.	NAME AND DESIGNATION	STATUS
1.	Dr. Ghulam Mustafa, Associate Professor of Chemistry	Convener
2.	Dr. Riaz ul Amin, Associate Professor of CS & IT	Member
3.	Dr. Muhammad Arshad Kamran, Associate Professor of Physics	Member
4.	Dr. Hamood ur Rehman, Associate Professor of Mathematics	Member
5.	Dr. Maryam Liaqat, Assistant Professor of Physics	Member
6.	Dr. Shehla Honey, Assistant Professor of Physics	Member
7.	Dr. Shazia Ayyaz, Assistant Professor of English	Member
8.	Dr. Fouzia Tanveer, Assistant Professor of Zoology	Member
9.	Dr. Muhammad Saleem Khun, Assistant Professor of Zoology	Member/Secretary
10.	Dr. Muhammad Iqbal, Assistant Professor of Botany	Member
11.	Dr. Muhammad Zaid Lakhvi, Assistant Professor of Islamic Studies	Member
12.	Mr. Rai. Imtiaz Hussain, Lecturer in Commerce	Member
13.	Ms. Fakhara Shahid, Lecturer in International Relations	Member


(DR. HAFIZ MUHAMMAD ARSHAD)
ADDL. REGISTRAR (IMP)



No. & date Even:

Copy for information and necessary action to the:

1. Secretary to Vice Chancellor, University of Okara
2. All members of the Fact Finding Committee
3. Office File

Report of the Probe/fact finding committee

Confidential

Dated: July 2, 2020


Reference No. Probe/FactFinding01/201


Respected Worthy Vice Chancellor,
University of Okara

Respected Sir,

On the behalf of fact finding committee that was constituted to probe and find facts to address the application/complaint of Dr. Nusrat Akhter, Associate Professor, Department of Education, University of Okara, I present to you the report prepared after series of meetings and committee sessions. The report is based on content presented in written applications and analysis of data provided in this support. The report presents core findings of the committee and recommendations.

Best Regards


Convener, probe/fact finding committee

Dr. RIAZULAMIN 

Dr. M. Zaid Latif 


FAKHARA SHAHID 

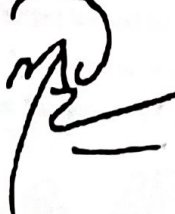
Dr. Maryam Liaquat 

Dr. Shehla Honey 

Dr. Muhammad Iqbal 

Dr. Hamood ur Rehman 

Dr. M. Saleem Khan 

Dr. Kamran 

Background

An application of work place harassment was submitted to Worthy Vice Chancellor via email by Dr. Nasreen Akhter Associate Professor, Dept. of Education, University of Okara. In the application Dr. Nasreen Akhter expressed two major concerns. The first concern is regarding pending notification of incharge faculty of education. This concern is more about administrative decision that comes under the competent authority of worthy Vice Chancellor University of Okara. The second concern is regarding workplace harassment in department of education. This concern is rather expressed by accusing three of faculty members of faculty of education namely Dr. Khalid Saleem, Associate Professor Dept. of Education, Dr. Tahir Khan Farooqi, Associate Professor Dept. of Education and Dr. Shehzad Ahmad, Assistant Professor Dept of Education. There are several allegations on each of the faculty member accused in this application.

Specifically the complainant Dr. Nasreen Akhter has following claims:-

1. Use of derogatory language and gestures from Dr. Khalid Saleem, Dr. Muhammad Tahir Khan Farooqi, and Dr. Shehzad Ahmad in the departmental meetings.
2. Insulting behavior and bullying in meetings and at different places especially when she was alone and passing by the corridor or Street in the University.
3. Harassment through commenting by the accused in the university offices on corridors.
4. Use of the discriminating comment by doctor Shehzad against Dr Nasreen on vacating the official residence (VC Sb. Ne nikal Diya to sweepers wale quarters Mein Chall gal).
5. Hitting the chair by Dr. Shehzad in and ask to leave the chair.
6. The use of statement made by Dr. Khalid Saleem like "to badkardar hai", "Now we will do open politics", "It will be difficult to work here".
7. The use of statement Dr. Muhammad Tahir Khan Farooqi "You will be so humiliated that you will not be able to come to university".

Committee Constitution

After receiving Application, realizing the seriousness of the matter, competent authority immediately constituted fact finding and recommendation committee via notification no.

UO/ADDL.REGg/2020/2126 dated June 20, 2020 to probe the matter, identify facts and provide recommendations.

On the recommendation of the committee a psychosocial counseling committee vide notification number UO/ADDL.REGg/2020/2127 was constituted. The committee comprise of three members(female) and were required to communicate and counsel the complainant as and when required.

Committee ToRs

- > To determine the genuineness of the complaint and views of the complainant regarding the seriousness of charges
- > Availability of evidence regarding charges leveled by the complainant
- > To furnish the recommendations for future course of action in this complaint within the framework of "The protection against harassment of women at workplace act 2010"

Huzefa

J. S. S. S.

Dr. Khalid Saleem

Dr. Tahir Khan Farooqi

Dr. Shehzad Ahmad

Dr. Khalid Saleem

Dr. Tahir Khan Farooqi

Dr. Shehzad Ahmad

Committee Meeting Proceedings

The committee's first meeting held on 22 June, 2020 from 11:30 to 2:30pm. The meeting was attended by all the members of the notified committee. The committee members assured their dedication and commitment through their contribution to creating a pleasant working environment characterized by its features including professionalism and courtesy. The committee proceedings were recorded. The complainant, the accused and all the witness were informed that committee proceeding is being recorded. The committee members were informed that all record including statements are strictly confidential. The accused parties were informed about allegations against them, and given fair chance to defend. The committee called complainant and accused parties one by one and gave sufficient time to state the matter, express their views and defend themselves if required. The committee recorded and collected the statements given in front of committee and written responses. There were several cross complaint applications and statements submitted to the committee. However, committee agreed that rather than submitting cross complaints, accused should be defending they have been alleged for. Based on analysis of all data that was available, committee is able to enlist the following findings.

Core Findings

The committee agreed to only include the written allegations and responses for consideration under its proceedings. The committee informed the accused parties about all the allegations against them and observed categorical denial by all the three accused members (Dr. Khalid Saleem, Dr. Tahir Khan Farooqi, and Dr. Shehzad Ahmad). The committee did not receive strong evidence for individual specific charges (in particular commenting in corridors etc), however, at the same time committee realizes that producing evidence of such incidents (commenting in corridors etc) is rarely possible. Similarly, the committee did not receive any solid evidence or witness that could support complainant's accusation of hitting her chair in the meeting by Dr. Shehzad Ahmed. Again the committee realized that such incident can hardly be verified.

Despite the individual denials, the committee found elements of hostile environment in the department, among the colleagues. Use of derogatory language, bullying, and comment passing seems to be integral part of every meeting of the department where both the parties are present. Although, this could not be identified who usually start or provoke such unpleasant and unprofessional situations, the Committee observed use of derogatory language, bullying, and comment passing can be the currency and is material of substance for work place harassment.

Similarly, the committee could conceptually visualize grouping in department that could cause isolation effect to the complainant or otherwise. In our opinion, such departmental situations can lead to feel dejected and demotivated. Misunderstanding or wrong understanding of democratic norms in decision making process in educational system can lead to vulnerable situations. This could highly impact academic performance, contributions and academic growth of the one being isolated in the department. Additionally, as per report of psychosocial counselling committee, the complainant is not in good health and feeling insecure and scared. The committee shows serious concerns in this regards, it is communicated through psychosocial counselling committee to rest assure that University stands committed to provide protection and justice in this regards.

These components may clearly be considered/pertaining towards work place harassment that complainant has listed in complainant's application.

Jawad
S. K. Raza *Dr. Raza* *Dr. Farooqi* *Dr. Saleem* *Dr. Tahir Khan* *Dr. Shehzad Ahmed*

In addition to the adverse departmental environment, the committee identified lack of appropriate administrative hierarchy that is also contributing to further worsening the situation. The members of the committee deeply felt the pain to see the presence of such low level politics in the department.

Recommendations

The committee has based its recommendations on realizing the faculty on accused side is senior however, lacks the knowledge about boundaries of workplace harassment. Based on the analysis of applications, statements and evidences:-

- We recommend the department in general and accused in particular to remain under observation for period of one year. The committee recommends the competent authority to take periodic review (may be Monthly) of the conduct of the accused. The periodic review may be presented to the same committee or competent authority may constitute new committee to review the conduct of faculty in the department of education.
- We recommend a complete ban of 6 months of any communication using any media for both the parties. All the departmental / faculty level meetings where both the parties are to be participating, with the approval of competent authority a third person from any other faculty should nominated to convene. He shall be responsible to ensure fair participation and contributions of all the parties in meetings. He shall also be submitting the report of conduct during the meeting to the committee constituted for review of the conduct.
- We recommend University Administration to rest assure protection for the complainant.
- The committee strongly recommends arranging professional counseling regarding workplace harassment act 2010 for its entire faculty in general and for the accused in particular.
- The committee recommends University should arrange awareness sessions for faculty, staff and students regarding work place harassment.
- The committee recommends arranging/appointing (as per University procedure) appropriate administrative hierarchy that can help to minimize the heat of adverse working environment.
- As regarding departmental supporting staff, there were some allegations of being supporting grouping in the department, we recommend immediate transfer of supporting staff from the department of education.
- At this stage, we do not feel need to recommend to proceed for further formal enquiry, however in future if any further such/similar incident with evidence of substance occurs, and the application/complaint is submitted, this should be made part of this process and the committee may revisit its decision and can recommend launching further formal enquiry under workplace harassment act 2010.
- The committee shall highly appreciate and take it as high if all the colleagues feel repent of playing their part, whatever they did whether intentionally, knowingly or unintentionally, unknowingly but contributing to this situation in the department, and submit apology to each other.

Handwritten signature: Anu Zehra

Handwritten signatures: Multiple signatures in various styles, including one that appears to be 'Anu Zehra' and others that are less legible.

FAKHARA

Separate Note from Ms. Fakhra Shahid
FAKHARA

In order to determine the veracity and truthfulness of the allegations, the parties were summoned on June 22, 2020. All were heard at length and following are the findings; the burden of proof was on the shoulder of Dr. Nasreen and she badly failed to produce any cogent, convincing and mind touching evidence to prove these allegations. She produced a single witness namely Hafiz Arshad to establish the allegations. The said witness did not adduce evidence in favor of the complainant. The witness was categorically asked what kind of derogatory remarks and other allegations were witnessed/observed by him. His answers were neither satisfactory nor up to the mark because he simply replied that the behavior of the respondents was severe with the complainant. Meaning thereby he did not corroborated the specific allegations, and such type of evidences does not have valid consideration in the eye of law.

It is settled principle of law that he/she who assert is bound to prove without any shadow of doubt. There is no iota of evidence from where one can derive that allegations are trustworthy. It is worth mentioning to note here that at the end of proceeding, the complainant herself stated that she had not the idea that such severe action would be initiated by the honorable authority, and now she has no option except to maintain the stance. Meaning there by, she was not serious to lodge the complaint and just made it in generic. Needless to add that she incorporated in her complaint that one of respondents hit her chair in front of everyone but she produced only a single witness which is not appreciable because that witness has also failed to support the assertions.

On the other hand, respondents produced five witnesses and all of them categorically rebutted the allegations of the complainant. So far as, the allegation regarding assigning of left over courses is concerned, in this regard, it is maintained that complainant was required to submit any tangible evidence to prove this assertion, though it was easy for her but she miserably failed to do the needful in support of her allegations.

To round of the discussion, it may be easily said that just because a person makes an accusation does not make it true. Moreover, extraordinary allegations require extraordinary evidence and everyone is innocent till proved guilty.

Recommendation

Supra position in view, it is recommended this worthless, fake and concocted complaint may kindly be consigned once for all.

FAKHARA