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Leading Ravenshaw University can be both exciting as well as challenging. While the excitement is due to the hopes borne out by the rich legacy of the institution as well as the ambitions nurtured by the young faculty of the University, the challenges are mostly of emergent nature and may have to be addressed with care and caution.

Challenges there will always be. In the midst of it all, in the recent past, small but significant steps were taken to strengthen the functioning of the University. A Proctorial Board was constituted for the first time to provide a transparent disciplinary and security system in order to strengthen the academic ambience of the University. Several student-oriented programmes like annual Youth Festival, Book Fair and community activities certainly help to showcase the talent of our students and inspire them to actively participate in University affairs. Initiatives such as the Ravenshaw ICAN (Inspiration, Career counselling And motivation) lectures which were organized by the Career Counseling Cell would go a long way in empowering the young students aspiring for not only a career but also a purposeful life. The activity should continue.

A major step towards facilitation of research in the University is the establishment of a uniquely planned Central Instrumentation Facility (CIF). Ravenshaw University now has a single-point instrumentation facility with free access for all faculty and research scholars. Every high-end instrument installed in CIF is assigned to a faculty member who specializes in the research field and operates a lab in the building. CIF also provides access to researchers from other academic institutions. It is noteworthy that there has been a significant enhancement in the extramural grant as well as quality and number of publications by faculty as can be accessed from the SCOPUS database. Five Departments now have special support like FIST and SAP. An IPR Centre was established to assist researchers. The Special Lecture Series called the Ravenshaw-150 Lectures has been a unique initiative of Ravenshaw University in which eminent scholars and pioneers of national and international repute were invited to share their knowledge, insights and experiences with faculty and research scholars to inspire and motivate them to explore newer possibilities both in research and life. The lectures can continue.

Regarding student placement, the Skill Development and Career Counselling Cell is expected to equip students for desired placement and prospects for entrepreneurship. We may now plan to develop an Incubation centre and encourage startups. Should we not look forward to contribute to "Make in India", "Atmanirbhar Bharat".

Special facilities such as the E-resource Centre, the Multipurpose Indoor Stadium, and the Wellness and Yoga Centre have been established and should be put into active use.

Despite acute faculty shortage, the University maintains a steady record in academic activities including research. I am hopeful that the faculty would continue to earn research grants for competitive and outstanding research leading to research publications in high impact factor journals. More attempts are in order for international collaborations both in teaching and research.

A number of steps were taken to facilitate teaching and research. They include: (i) Ravenshaw teaching-cum-research fellowship and Research support scheme for young faculty; (ii) setting up of

five Research Centres namely Centre for Women's Studies, Centre for Translation and Digital Humanities, Centre for Sri Aurobindo Studies and Futurology, Centre for Bioinformatics and Computational Biology, and Centre for Performing Arts of which the first three are already active; (iii) the establishment of Central Instrumentation Facility (CIF). An IPR Centre and a Research Development Cell were established to assist researchers. All these, if worked upon according to the spirit and objectives with which they were initiated, would surely help Ravenshaw attain a new high.

Every year more than 200 students qualify NET. We need to be proactive to retain a good number of them for research and teaching. The faculty and the laboratories/ research centres need to become more visible and competitive and acceptable.

The University is currently mostly staffed by young teachers with diversified research interests. It is desirable that the 172 teachers proposed to be recruited newly have interdisciplinary exposure.

The development of the Mahanadi (second) Campus was inspired by the motto "Ideas to innovations". One could begin by introducing state-of-the-art teaching and research programmes in (to name a few) Neuroscience, Human genomics, Food technology, Microbiology, Nanotechnology, Neuroeconomics, advanced computer courses, Foreign languages, Library and Information Science, advanced specializations in Management teaching programmes, etc.

Ravenshaw is different and should remain different!

I extend my hearty congratulations to the new Vice-Chancellor Prof. Sanjay Kumar Nayak and wish him the very best. I also extend my wishes to the faculty and staff of Ravenshaw University who have always been a great source of strength and support.



Ishan Patro