

Mentor–mentee Programme

Objectives of the Practice:

The aim of the Mentor–mentee Programme is to connect Teachers who have a lot of knowledge and experience to students to offer advice and guidance for their holistic growth. Through this Programme, the respective teacher (mentor) supports and guides his/her students (mentees), thereby helping them overcome challenges.

The Context:

It is essential for students to set suitable and achievable goals, and work towards their realization in order to excel in academics and in life. This necessitates the possession of a healthy mind and body along with a supporting environment. though, students encounter problems which distract them from maintaining their focus. The problems are generally the result of the inability of students to realize (on their own) the areas upon which they need to channelize their efforts and energy. The problems could also arise from their misconceptions and ignorance regarding the consequences of their actions; or even their insecurity in sharing their anxieties and/or difficulties. Such matters can be remedied through the Mentor-mentee Programme wherein students are provided with academic and emotional support. The building of trust and friendship between the mentor and the mentee enables the latter to share his/her concerns, engage in a fruitful and enriching dialogue and to consider a variety of potential solutions.

The Practice:

The Programme draws from the Vision Statement of the College viz. ‘Formation for Transformation’. Faculty members are assigned, at the commencement of the academic year, with a set of students to be mentored. The formal interactions are conducted, once in a month, during designated timeslots in the assigned classrooms. Mentors possess the personal profiles of their mentees (with basic information e.g. personal data, contact numbers, home addresses, details about their interests/hobbies/future plans etc.). During the formal interactions, the mentees are reminded about the dress code, expected behaviour, punctuality, attendance requirements, examination preparation, the importance of hard work and of non-adoption of unfair means during examinations, non-tolerance of ragging and sexual harassment, availability of counsellors on campus, career options etc. They are counselled about healthy lifestyles, cleanliness, road safety, environmental issues etc. They are also informed about the various opportunities, schemes and scholarships/freeships available. Apart from the monthly formal interactions, the mentees are encouraged to meet the mentor in informal settings

on a one-to-one basis depending of the mutual convenience of both. Mentors also monitor the academic progress of their mentees. They applaud their achievements, offer guidance regarding shortcoming in grades and encourage them to work towards improvement and excellence. The mentors also maintain a confidential data sheet which details the mentoring services rendered. Overall, the Programme is monitored by a committee comprising one Coordinator and two faculty members drawn from each stream. The assignment of mentees to the mentors is done by the Committee which also prepares/suggests inputs for each formal session keeping in mind students' needs and relevant current issues. PAt the end of each academic year, mentees are required to provide their feedback regarding the various topics discussed during the formal interactions. Wherever feasible, the suggestions/feedback are utilized to bring about improvements in the Programme.

Evidence of Success:

The success of this Programme can be indirectly gauged from the following: The cleanliness of the College campus has significantly improved. The garbage bins, placed at various locations on the campus, are unfailingly used by the students. The counselling regarding behaviour and code of conduct has further improved the discipline on campus. Students also display a sense of responsibility in turning/switching off taps, lights and fans, when not in use. An improvement in academic performance has also been observed. The enhanced awareness regarding the various opportunities available after graduation has led to a greater number of students pursuing higher education. The utilization of the services of the counsellors has been observed to have improved the behaviour, conduct and mental health of students.

Problems Encountered and Resources Required:

During the academic year 2021-22, the Programme had to be conducted in online mode due to the prevalent pandemic situation. Despite the serious efforts of the mentors, the functioning of the Programme was somewhat inferior to that in earlier years when it was conducted in physical mode. Further, the mentors were themselves burdened with the switch from physical to online mode of instruction which necessitated many an hour of additional preparation. Consequently, they were forced to devote lesser time to their mentoring activities.

A part of the above, with the aim of helping students develop moral values, ability to pray, the College also has a very good practice of the Morning Prayer. A schedule is sent to the Departments, who in turn assign the prayer to their respective students/Teachers. Every day at 8.30 a.m. the Prayer is said by

students/Teachers on the public address system. This helps students to be peaceful, acknowledge the presence of God in their lives and makes them peaceful, confident and happy.

Covid Awareness drives and practices:

Objective of the practice:

COVID-19 has become a global pandemic by infecting people of almost all over the world. Human civilizations are facing threat for their survival and livelihood. No country is getting any substantial relief and solution from this pandemic and are facing challenges to convince citizens to take precautions in preventing the spread of COVID-19. In view of this, St. Xavier's College, Mapusa – Goa implemented several SOP's for its staff and students.

The Context:

COVID-19 started from one city of China in December 2019, but in a short span of time, it covered almost all over the world. Nearly 216 countries of the whole world are struggling for their civilization and livelihood against the coronavirus pandemic. On January 11, 2020, China declared first death of their 61 years old citizen due to COVID-19, who was exposed to the seafood market, but then the death reached exponentially to 357,736 on 29th May 2020. On February 11, 2020, WHO announced this coronavirus disease as COVID-19 and pandemic on March 11, 2020, after reaching the virus infection to 114 countries across the world. The situation was found to worsen especially with the arrival of the second wave as the academic year 2020 – 2021 was approaching its end. The state of Goa also felt the third wave (omicron variant) in the beginning of 2022 in the month of January – February. The institution therefore adapted various methods to minimize the steady flow of the exams taking place in the month of February 2022.

The Practice

The Covid pandemic continued its effect in the academic year 2021 – 2022. In view of this, only the T.Y. examination was conducted in offline mode in the campus. Proper social distancing was maintained in each classrooms. Students were compulsory made to wear masks, any sick students were not permitted to answer the exam, covid infected students were given another chance for

examination and non-vaccinated students were assigned separate blocks to answer their papers. Supervisors to the blocks were also provided with gloves. Also the student answer books were given to teachers for assessment after minimum of 3 days keeping in mind the safety of faculty members.

To minimize the risk, the F.Y. and S.Y. semester end exams were conducted in online mode as well.

For the odd semester, masks were made compulsory for the students to wear during lectures. Also students were encouraged to take the COVID Vaccines. The same was also announced on the public address system.

Special rooms were also allocated for students who were feeling unwell in the college campus.

In addition to these protocols, awareness drive on Covid was also initiated by the Department of Microbiology.

Evidence for success:

The semester end exam could easily be conducted and completed despite the effects of the omicron wave which hit the state. The academic year also resumed with maintaining all SOPs.

Problems Encountered and Resources Required:

Given the situation in the State, the institution did its best to minimize the risk of the variant that affected the State of Goa. Many staff members unfortunately got infected with the omicron variant. The situation in the state went so bad that the government closed down most of the educational institutes from mid-January to get the situation under control.