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Post quotas, IIT-B needs more faculty

WANTED 300 TEACHERS ■ Foreign faculty on contract, more campuses to start with

MIHIKA BASU
AUGUST 24

THE proposal to introduce 27 per cent OBC quotas in aided institutions and the decision to stagger it over a maximum of three years has no doubt come as a welcome breather, but at IIT-Bombay the worries remain—faculty, number of seats, infrastructure being top priorities.

Considering the challenges ahead—IIT-B alone will require another 300 teachers—it has already moved various proposals to the government including okaying foreigners on contract as faculty and more campuses to tackle the problem.

“Our request to include Indian teachers with foreign passports has been accepted by the government. We have now asked the government to allow foreigners on contract as part of our faculty for a period of 5 years,” said IIT-B director Ashok Misra.

Misra added the IITs have also sought an increase in the retirement age for professors. They are considering second campuses—IIT-B, he said, is looking at Gujarat and Goa, while IIT Kharagpur is considering Bhubaneswar as an option.

“IIT-Bombay should ideally

have a 1:9 teacher-to-student ratio as against the present 1:12. And the implementation of the OBC quota regime will require more professors due to a significant increase in the number of seats,” Misra said.

The IITs, he said, have around 5,544 students which will increase to 8,000 in the new quota regime, amounting to almost a 54 per cent rise. “We will require additional 300-400 teachers, which is definitely a challenge. This will also ensure that seats for the general category remain unchanged,” added Misra.

Earlier, IITs, IIMs and other medical institutions had voiced their inability to introduce OBC quotas at one go citing financial and academic problems. The possibility of a sudden expansion “leading to loss of merit and excellence,” was one of their primary concerns.

The infrastructural hassles are there, said Anil Kumar Singh, Dean of Academic Programmes at IIT-B, but such upgradations can and will be financed by the government. “The big question is how IIT-B or the other IITs get teachers of the same calibre that an institution like ours demands. We will have to take all steps to ensure that nothing dilutes the brand name,” he asserted.

Misra insisted there will be

JEE-2007 ON APRIL 8

Some good news. In a bid to reduce stress levels for IIT aspirants, the Joint Entrance Examination or JEE-2007 will be a single-stage objective-type exam comprising two papers of three-hour duration each as against last year’s three papers of two hours each.

Ashok Misra, director IIT-B, provided the highlights of the future:

- Exam on April 8, 2007 under unprecedented security
- To have three separate sections on Physics, Chemistry and Mathematics
- The degree of difficulty will be less
- IIT also considering introducing online tests by 2010
- May open test centres in Singapore, Saudi Arabia, the Middle East

—ENS

no compromise in the quality of teachers. Even though the IITs were initially maintaining they were waiting for clear-cut directives from the government, Misra hinted on the sidelines of a conference at the IIT-B campus here on Thursday that its directors have already begun discussions to ensure smooth implementation of the OBC quota.

“A three-year methodology seems most practical,” Singh said, adding IIT-B will also have to make changes in its curriculum and introduce flexible initiatives for the benefit of all concerned.



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