

CHARTER OF ASPIRATIONS

STUDENT BODY OF NATIONAL LAW UNIVERSITY, DELHI

The Student Body of National Law University Delhi is releasing this statement to convey our regards to our Hon'ble Vice Chancellor Professor (Dr.) Ranbir Singh and lay out a Charter of Aspirations that we wish to put forth to the Selection Committee.

Almost ten years ago, National Law University, Delhi was just a nascent idea. It was Professor (Dr.) Ranbir Singh, who, not only agreed to become the founding Vice Chancellor, but also took the University to such heights that would not have been possible but for his vision. Professor Singh gave 11 valuable years to this institution and the Student Body expresses its wholehearted indebtedness to him for his every single contribution in raising the University to its current stature.

As those most profoundly impacted by any and all decisions taken by and for the University, the Student Body would like to assert itself as an important stakeholder in the current search and selection processes that have been initiated to appoint a new Vice Chancellor to our University.

Recognising its interest in the selection process of the new Vice Chancellor, the Student Body would request the Selection Committee to ensure that the selection process would be clear and transparent. The Student Body wishes that the details of the applied candidates be informed to the Student Body at every necessary juncture to ensure adequate participation. Details shall include: Names of the applied candidates, Academic Performance Indicators (API) score and the Vision Statement for the university as provided in the point (13) of Application Form.

The Student Body wishes that the new Vice Chancellor enjoy goodwill, credibility, and a far-reaching connect within the NLU community. We would like to put forth the following expectations from the next Vice Chancellor:

1. Fostering better environment for research

The 2018 and 2019 NIRF rankings catapulted the University to the second position in the league of Indian law schools. A large portion of that credit goes to the research environment that the University fosters. With over sixteen research centres producing path-breaking research in different areas of law, the footprints of the University in the domain of research continue to grow and become prominent.

Therefore, the Student Body wishes that the present standards and atmosphere with regard to the research centres on campus must only grow and not diminish. The autonomy that the

research centres enjoy must not only be preserved, but enhanced in every manner. The Student Body hopes that the Vice Chancellor will encourage the existing research centres and aid the establishment of more such avenues

2. Improving quality of academics and initiating academic reforms

In the pursuit of academic excellence, we believe that the Vice Chancellor should endeavour to uplift the standards of teaching and regularly reform the academic structures. The Vice Chancellor's prime objective should be to take active efforts for attracting competent and reputed academicians for all subjects, and not just a selected few.

The Vice Chancellor should take steps to hire motivated faculty and foster an atmosphere of academic freedom, where modern and progressive methods of teaching are employed. The comprehensive mandatory courses must be supplemented with visiting professors and a diverse range of seminar courses. To ensure that the goals of quality teaching are achieved, the Vice Chancellor should institute a system of student feedback on which academic policies could be based. We hope that the Vice Chancellor takes student concerns into account while reforming the curriculum.

As students of one of the best law schools in India, we envision a Vice Chancellor who will boost international collaborations and facilitate participation in programmes outside India, and also host students from other universities through summer/winter school, collaborative research, semester exchange, *et cetera*.

3. Expanding infrastructure

While the University has been fortunate to enjoy infrastructural facilities far better than most government universities/colleges, we believe that there still remain certain infrastructural needs to be met. We expect the Vice Chancellor to facilitate the expansion of infrastructure to make campus space more accessible, and ensure that the existing infrastructure is optimally utilised for academic and extra-curricular engagement.

4. Encouraging and facilitating sports facilities, cultural activities, and co-curricular activities

The University is not only a space where one acquires the skills required to be a competent professional and an upstanding citizen but also a place where young adults learn to be healthy, well-rounded individuals. The Vice Chancellor's objective should be to facilitate the physical and mental well-being of students by ensuring they have access to space, time, and infrastructure for extracurricular activities such as mooting, debating, cultural pursuits, sports *et cetera*.

5. Creating a safe and inclusive space for all students, and special efforts for minority groups

There is an increasing frequency of incidents of casteism, sexism, and homophobia in universities. This has resulted in a pressing need for the University to be a space where *all* students can have constructive discussions and receive support without fear of being subjected to micro-aggressions. Apart from students, the University also ought to ensure a safe and empowering environment for its staff, both teaching and non-teaching.

There is also a need to emphasise that safe spaces and free speech are not mutually exclusive, and although the University is meant to encourage debate and critical thinking, it should not birth an environment of hostility and disharmony. The Student Body looks forward to a Vice Chancellor who would,

- a. stand in support of women, *bahujan* & *adivasi* persons, the differently abled, persons belonging to religious and sexual minorities;
- b. is open to concerns raised by persons of all identities and ensures that affirmative action is taken to empower those who are persecuted due to their identities/choices; and,
- c. ensure by conduct, policies, and action, that sexism, homophobia, casteism, and other forms of discrimination are clearly discouraged

6. Ensuring proper management of funds and favourable administration of student affairs

The Student Body has stood in solidarity with students of other universities in their protests against the injustices meted out to them by their college administrations. Notwithstanding our faith in selection of the next Vice Chancellor, we hope that the Selection Committee will bear in mind the reputation of integrity and transparency which the University has come to exemplify.

Prior allegations of discriminatory actions against minorities, academic irregularity or mismanagement of funds on a candidate are strongly disapproved of by the Student Body. It should warrant further scrutiny to ensure that the appointment is in consonance with the dignity and esteem which the post demands. Further, it is paramount to consider the nature of the relationship that the candidate shared with the Student Body at their previous institution. Their ability to foster mutual trust and transparency is an uncompromising requirement for the Student Body.

We hope and believe that the Selection Committee will take our expectations into account while selecting the Vice Chancellor of our University.