

Best Practice 1

1. Title of the Practice

‘Earn While you Learn’ Scheme -A Student-friendly Initiative

Activity: Student managed Help Desk during admission

2. Objectives of the Practice

- ✓ To provide job opportunity and stipend during summer break under the ‘Earn While you Learn’ scheme
- ✓ To enable the students gain confidence in managing people and in improving communication skills
- ✓ To develop rapport between volunteering students and aspiring entrants
- ✓ To provide information about the various academic programs offered by the College
- ✓ To answer admission queries by orienting them about the pre-requisites for the different programs

3. The Context

Sir Vithaldas Thackersey College of Home Science (Autonomous) offers unique academic programs. The aided degree program is BSc in Home Science which offers choice of seven specializations. The College offers many self-financed programs such as post-graduate degree programs [M.Sc. Specialized Dietetics, M. Design (Fashion Design)] and various certificate and diploma courses.

The college has maximized its academic autonomy since 1995 and has developed innovative courses with Choice Based Credit System (CBCS). Students seeking admission find the structure of the programs different from those offered elsewhere. The College trains volunteers to assist parents and students in the admission process. A helpdesk was arranged and manned by student volunteers during the admission period under the ‘Earn While You Learn’ scheme.

4. The Practice

Student volunteers were selected for manning the helpdesk every year to assist in the admissions process. Looking at the positive response from students seeking admission, the college decided to take a step forward and provide remuneration to the students. This initiative motivated students to apply under the scheme ‘Earn While You Learn’ for a summer job.

Augmenting support through help desk:

Admissions process is stressful to parents and students in making right choice for higher education. There are a lot of colleges offering different types of programs at degree and post graduate levels. Parents and students look for clarity regarding the right programs suitable to the students’ caliber and interest. It is imperative that colleges have understood this need and have developed websites to provide information regarding their courses. It should be understood that these parents and students are from different socio-economic backgrounds and may not be technologically enabled. Some parents would like to have a face to face interaction and collect information regarding admission

process. Students seeking admission find it very encouraging to gather information from their senior students about the program, facilities and environment of the college.

Being a Women's College, there are enquiries from parents and students from other districts of Maharashtra and different states. Keeping this in mind, the Student Welfare Committee identifies second year students who can work at the helpdesk during the summer vacation. Usually they work for the entire month of May and June and if required in the first week of July depending on the admission schedule for FYBSc.

I. Selection process:

- a. Students are asked to apply for this scheme during the month of March.
- b. The student welfare committee shortlists the students and recruits the volunteers. Volunteers are selected to man the desk during the months of May and June.

II. Orientation and Training:

- a. The students are oriented to all the programs offered by the College.
- b. The list of FAQ's with answers is discussed with them.
- c. Procedure for recording information about the admission query is taught.
- d. Important dates regarding application, submissions (online and offline), essential documents to be submitted, entrance exams, choice of programs and fees payment to be shared.
- e. Students are advised to distribute brochures, pamphlets etc. to parents and prospective students.

III. Help Desk:

- a. A Helpdesk is set up near the entrance of the College along with display of informative charts about various academic programs and important notices regarding admission.
- b. Helpdesk students meet all the visitors and solve their queries. Teaching faculty is also available for any further assistance.
- c. A register is maintained to record the name of the caller / visitor along with the contact details.
- d. In case a query is not solved by volunteers they take help of the teaching faculty. Then they contact the concerned person to give the required information.

5. Evidence of Success

- ✓ This initiative boosts the confidence of employed students in handling enquires and people management. It also enhances their communication skills.
- ✓ More students wish to apply for this scheme due to monetary benefits.
- ✓ The parents of the first generation learners benefit by direct interaction with the volunteers in regional language.
- ✓ It helps in easing out work pressure on the staff.
- ✓ It clarifies any doubts regarding the courses, programs and admission formalities.
- ✓ Students get guidance to choose specializations and optional courses (subjects).
- ✓ Appreciative feedback from parents was received during the orientation program post admission that provision of the help desk was very beneficial during the entire admission process.

6. Problems Encountered and Resources Required

- a. Detailed mentoring by the faculty is required to train the volunteers.
- b. Subject choices and information about the various courses in the programs may not be conveyed in detail as the volunteer may not be from that specialization.

Best Practice - 2

1. Title of the Practice:

Three - tier orientation program - Leap to a new beginning

2. Objectives of the Practice

- To orient the first year students regarding the rules and regulations of the Senior College
 - ✓ Different structure of the degree program offered by the Autonomous College (B.Sc. Honors – 140 Credits, B.Sc. Regular – 120 Credits, with 7 specializations)
 - ✓ CBCS – Choice Based Credit System – offering choice of Generic Electives and Discipline Specific Elective courses over 6 semesters
- To acquaint them about internal and external assessment for theory/ practical courses and unique pattern of continuous assessment
- To familiarize the new students with the physical infrastructure of the College (situated in a composite building in the University campus)
- To familiarize the parents about the College infrastructure and orientation about the degree programs

3. The Context

- There are vast differences which the students experience in all the systems in Junior and Senior College. e.g. Semester system, pattern of examination etc.
- This practice helps students to be more confident in the new environment.
- The College is situated in a composite building with many other University Departments, Central Library, Hostel, Administrative Offices, Bank, Auditorium etc.
- The classrooms and laboratories are spread over 4 levels and have their entrances from various corridors and even terrace which is quite perplexing to newcomers.
- The students are grouped for their various courses and need to go to different rooms and laboratories during the day.
- Classes usually start immediately after the orientation day hence it is pertinent that the students know the location of their classes in advance.

4. The Practice

The College has started following initiatives for the new entrants.

I. Common orientation for parents and students (Tier I):

- a. Welcome address by Principal, Introduction of HOD and staff, Chairpersons of various Committees, Counsellor, Student Welfare Schemes and Scholarship and Medical facilities with in- house doctor.
- b. Examination and library orientation

II. Department orientation (Tier II):

- a. Introduction of Department staff, Course teachers and Mentors

- b. Orientation to courses and activities with perspective to local, regional, national and global relevance.
- c. Parents are given information about the attendance rules, honors program, parent - teacher meeting, and meeting the HOD with prior permission.

III. *Tour of the college premises (Tier III):*

- a. The senior students are identified as volunteers to assist the faculty in the entire process of orientation and touring the campus.

5. Evidence of Success

- a. The feedback received from first year students that the orientation has helped them to familiarize with the different departments and the official procedures followed for day to day activities.
- b. The orientation process promotes interaction of the first year students with peers.
- c. The feedback has encouraged the college to continue this practice and improve the process of orientation to minimize the problems encountered.
- d. Parents are assured that their children are able to understand the college rules and regulations.
- e. Over the years there has been an observation that the first year students get familiarized with the campus post the college tour. The next day these students can locate the notice board for their timetables, classrooms, official procedures like making ID cards, Railway Concession forms, procedure to apply for student lockers, hostel procedures and submission of official documents for completion of admission process.

6. Problems Encountered and Resources Required

- a. Volunteers who can communicate in English and vernacular language need to be identified keeping in mind the inclusive approach of the institution.
- b. Orientation process is a full day activity with a detailed schedule which requires a proper planning and execution.