

Date: 25th January 2025

National Law University Odisha

Press Statement

It is very unfortunate that members of the Students Council have decided to use the prestigious and crucial events of the University to arm twist the University to give in to their illegal and unreasonable demand of removal of evaluation of submission regarding tutorial classes. They are well aware that the University is holding its 3rd Flower Show on 25-26 January 2025 in which a large number of members from the community including children and adults from the three adoptive villages of University come to participate in the Rangoli, On the Spot Painting Competition, Dance Competition, and Food Festival. They are also aware that the first ever Review Commission is visiting the NLUO on 27-28 January 2025. The fact that they chose to give their 24-hour notice of protest on 23rd January 2025, which was a State Holiday, shows their mala-fide intention of pressurising the University into giving in to their unlawful and unreasonable demand.

The root cause of their protest is the decision taken by the Academic Council to ensure that the students take the tutorial classes seriously by allocating 15 marks for evaluation of their presentations on the basis of the tutorial classes. They have been pressurising the Vice Chancellor to set it aside. Any clarification by the Vice Chancellor that a Vice Chancellor cannot overrule the decision of the statutory body has fallen on deaf ears. The Vice Chancellor had assured them that the matter will be placed in the next Academic Council with their representation but the members of the Student Council are not open to reason and have decided to use the number power to put pressure on the University give in to their unlawful demand at this crucial juncture that will adversely affect the reputation of their University.

The unreasonable and malafide nature of their protest is manifested in their actions yesterday. After the Registrar, Chief Warden, and Controller of exam on behalf of the Vice Chancellor agreed to take two interim measures of suspending evaluation till the next Academic Council meeting and partial opening of the Academic Block to which the members of the Student Council agree to stop the protest, and the Vice Chancellor agreed to meet them, they backtracked and started asking for acceptance of more demands by the Vice Chancellor including an open ended GBM. They have been told repeatedly that all their demands and holding a GBM will be met after the visit of the Review Commission is over, but the members of the Students Council are not open to listening.

As their core demand was not accepted, the members of the Student Council have escalated the matter by listing a long list of complaints, some of which had never been raised by them earlier, like the issue relating to the complaints to Ombudsman. They are dismissive of all the mental and physical health measures taken by the University by appointing a full-time doctor, four full-time nurses, a full-time counsellor, tie up with the MHI of SCB for any serious mental health issues, and umpteen training programmes and awareness sessions organised by the University. They are also dismissive of the fact that all the girls toilets have been renovated last year; rooms in the hostel where the students complained of seepage have been tiled to prevent seepage; the windows have been fitted with mesh, all the broken seats in the hostel mess have been replaced; a new classroom has been created; all the tutorial rooms have been made functional, the biggest library in all the NLUOs has been opened with state of art furniture and facilities; the three story airconditioned library is open 22 hours a day; they have access to almost all the online data bases; the library also has discussion rooms for moot court and ADR teams as well as larger rooms for holding students committee meetings; IT access in the hostel area was upgraded with a cost of close to one crore last

year; the process of upgrading the IT Access is being worked on and is taking time as the cost of Rs. Crores is prohibitive and the University is working on prioritising the components in the proposal for graded implementation.

The students have been raising the mental health issues time and again - be it classes schedule beyond 4.30 pm despite they being residential students or it be enforcement of the attendance rule prescribed by the Bar Council of India. They demand compensatory attendance for going for internship during the semester which is also against the Bar Council of India rules.

It is usually believed that students are always right and the administration is always lacking. In this case, it is a clear case when the students of NLUO have decided to pressurise the University to give in to their illegal, unlawful, and unreasonable demand of setting aside the evaluation for tutorial classes by choosing to protest at the time of very crucial events of the University.

It is really unfortunate that some students are misguiding the other students to join the protest. Most of the members of the Students Council have become members by default as nobody else stood for election. It shows that the general body of the students does not want to participate in the way the Students Council of NLUO functions. Some members soon after their election, resigned from the post due to undue pressure. In fact, despite repeated calls for standing for Batch Representatives, no student filed their nomination. Despite repeated reminder by the Vice Chancellor to send a letter of request to nominate the remaining batch representative, no such request was made till January 2025 even though the declaration of result of election was 20th August 2024. The Vice Chancellor could nominate three batch representatives with lot of difficulties. Even though the membership was complete on 14th January 2025, the members of the Student Council have yet not held their internal election to choose their executive members and appoint cultural and sports secretary. The call for Protest itself is unjustified as it has been given by members of the Students Council without any executive body in place.

The University reiterates that it remains open to have reasonable dialogue with the students and resolve their legitimate concerns after these two crucial events of the University.