

## **7.2 BEST PRACTICES**

**7.2.1 - Describe two best practices successfully implemented by the Institution during the year as per NAAC format provided in the Manual**

### **1. Title of the Practice**

**SMILE - Synergic Manipal Integrated Learning Engagement.**

### **2. Objectives of the Practice (100)**

In order to meet its future leadership requirements, MAHE initiated “SMILE” - Synergic Manipal Integrated Leadership Engagement - a 9-month leadership development program in partnership with Global HR Consulting Firm People Business, with clear plans to identify and develop a pool of young academic leaders to take up key positions in the future, by exposing them to the range of responsibilities involved, and the complexities of leveraging preparation program reform in universities.

Main objectives of the program are to:

- Facilitate sustained approach to faculty empowerment
- Aim at leadership development
- Provide an opportunity for growth in in-house talent
- Intend succession planning

### **3.The Context (150 words)**

The past decade has seen increasing evidence describing the difficulties of leadership in the university environment, changes in leadership roles and organizational practices, and the volatility of the higher education climate.

There has been high growth in student intake, geographical spread, and internationalization; higher focus on innovation and research; quality focus; building new capabilities; higher complexities due to regulations and further education and learning models. The SMILE program was intended to create a pool of dynamic leaders to take up critical/key academic/administrative positions at MAHE and manage the related complexities. A program of this nature is novel in the education sector.

MAHE upskilling leadership at all levels meets a unique need in educational leadership. Making faculty truly capable of leading change unearths hidden individual talent and organizational potential, resulting in a more innovative and adaptive culture. This will help MAHE to drive its culture in the journey of its growth.

### **4. The Practice (400 words)**

The SMILE strategy, rolled out in January 2015, was to build leadership competencies across the board, from first-level managers to top management. MAHE partnered with experts in the leadership development field - People Business, a global consulting firm, in the design and execution of the SMILE Program.

Profile:

Based on essential eligibility criteria, potential participants for the program were asked to apply for the initiative. This created an aspirational value for the program, and only genuinely motivated candidates applied.

After a rigorous selection process by a MAHE leadership panel, the participants went through a profiling phase that included a development center, 360-degree feedback, and MBTI (Myers Briggs Type Indicator). The profiling was based on key competencies considered essential for future leaders of MAHE.

Major elements:

- The **SMILE 1.0** Programme, took place from February 2015 till October 2015 and involved training of 60 faculty members, many of whom were assigned higher positions at MAHE. Continuing its effort to identify in-house talent, MAHE initiated **SMILE 2.0** in 2016, in which 29 faculty members were trained, enabling MAHE to discover potential candidates for critical leadership positions across the organization in future.
- As developing leadership skills is a continuous process, **Phase 2 of SMILE** was launched in June 2017 for all the participants of SMILE 1.0 and SMILE 2.0. Phase 2 focused on providing the participants with more customized inputs for career development. It involved classroom sessions on advanced leadership skills, individual development plan, career development plan, management skills development inputs, and providing them with job enrichment to achieve overall career goals. The development inputs were spread over more than 12 months.

**Phases of the Program:**

**Educate:** The participants were provided with an understanding of the journey ahead. The benefits of learning and how they would affect their career were provided.

**Develop:** This phase was based on 70:20:10 principle. This included customized classroom sessions based on key competencies, action learning by executing impact projects relevant to MAHE, coaching by People Business using a customized learning dossier, and mentoring by internal leaders at MAHE. Sample Action Planning projects as part of SMILE were developed.

**Evaluate:** The program was evaluated on multiple fronts. The immediate reaction feedback showed the overall effectiveness of the classroom session. The behavioural outcomes of coaching and execution of the projects were articulated, emphasizing how they impacted the participant as self, team, and at the institutional levels. The projects were also evaluated.

## 5. Evidence of Success (200 words)

Exposure of the faculty to the University Challenges and providing the big picture was a great benefit of SMILE. The impact projects acted as catalysts of innovation and institution building. The program also helped to identify talent to take on enhanced growth and more extensive responsibilities. Involvement of MAHE Leaders as Mentors was well received and helped create a culture of "Leaders Create Leaders".

Success factors:

1. Since the program was designed in line with institutional priorities with the strong support of the leadership of MAHE, a pool of young leaders with a clear understanding of the vision and mission of the organization was created.
2. Phase 2 of the SMILE program clearly addressed the learning needs of the individual participants, which has helped to strengthen them in key areas impacting the organization.
3. The success of SMILE 1.0 of 2015 inspired MAHE to continue with SMILE 2.0 in 2016 with 29 participants with similar vigour. Realizing the success of SMILE 2.0 through the benefits of the projects executed by the participants, and their acceptance of higher responsibilities at MAHE, Phase 2 of SMILE 2.0 was deployed in the year 2017, which focused on providing customized inputs for career development.

## 6. Problems Encountered and Resources Required (150 words)

Resources required for deploying the project in financial terms (estimated 2.1 crores)

| SMILE           |             |   |   |
|-----------------|-------------|---|---|
| Content         | Year        | Total Number of Participants  | Per Participant Cost  |
| SMILE           | 2015 - 2016 | 60  | 1.55 Lakhs/Participant  |
| SMILE 2.0       | 2016 -2017  | 29  | 1.55 Lakhs/Participant  |
| SMILE –PHASE II | 2017 - 2018 | 82<br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High Potential Candidates: 15</li> <li>• Potential Candidates: 46</li> <li>• Others: 21</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advanced Leadership Program– Rs.20,25,000</li> <li>• Developing High Potential – Rs.23,10,000</li> <li>• Developing Potentials – Rs.23,50,000</li> <li>• Other Category – Rs.3,00,000</li> </ul> |

No Problems were encountered in implementing the SMILE project. The participants had to dedicate their time to undergo the training and for the completion of projects as a part of the training. This was quite challenging as they had to attend to their assigned job responsibilities, and also devote time for various activities under the SMILE project. However, all of them managed this challenge successfully. On completion of the training, the candidates were included in the talent pipeline to assume leadership positions in MAHE.

## 7. Notes (Optional) (150 words)

**Outcome**

MAHE has successfully invested time and resources in training the leaders of tomorrow to ensure that senior academic leadership roles are handled by professionals with the right set of skills and clear goals.

The effectiveness of the SMILE Leadership Transformation Program is evident from the fact that out of the 132 participants, 38 were considered ready to take up key leadership roles, and 76 could be considered ready for higher responsibilities in the next 2-3 years with continued inputs. 21 participants have already taken up key roles, out of which 11 are Women Leaders. The Leadership training program also led to High Impact business projects that had clear ROI for MAHE. Apart from preparing leaders for tomorrow, the program also made the participants effective in their current roles. About 80% of the participants have improved their ratings profoundly when compared to the previous year.

## **2. Title of the Practice**

### **Epad -Digitization of Examination and Evaluation system**

#### **2.ObjectivesofthePractice (100)**

MAHE believes in complete transparency and eco-friendliness in its academic process. The primary objective of digitization of examination and evaluation process is to make it transparent, error-free and quick, with the added advantage of reduced manpower. Another best practice here is the analysis of the outcome measures of academic activities by a software based tool supported by InPods Inc. The output generated by this application gives feedback about the students' outcome achievements to the students and faculty members. Another noteworthy advantage of this digitization is the drastic reduction in paper usage, which significantly aligns with MAHE's environment policy: 'Go Green'.

#### **3.TheContext (150)**

Previously, examinations at MAHE were being conducted using the conventional paper based method, involving answer books, question papers and stationery. Digitization of examinations has eliminated the use of all these. Previously, papers were coded, bundled and sent to evaluation halls. Examiners had to enter the marks in evaluation sheets and consolidated mark lists. This method was slow and there was scope for errors in calculation, entry etc. Also, totalling errors, questions missed out for evaluation etc. had to be verified manually. These challenges were overcome by using an onscreen marking system. MAHE moved the processing of results to a software based platform. For closing the chain in outcome based education, an analysis to ensure the attainment of the intended outcomes of the academic programs is important. This has been achieved through InPods system. The newly established Student Lifecycle Management System (SLcM) has made the result processing activities simple and fast.

#### **4.ThePractice (400)**

In this innovative technology, which is practised in almost all institutions of MAHE, the student is provided with a writable tablet device called ExamPad (epWriter) to write the examination. The fingerprint facility available in the device is used for authentication and capturing the attendance. The question paper is uploaded to the system prior to the examination by the academic section concerned. The question paper gets downloaded automatically before the examination, and will open only at the specified time. A specified area for writing is available, on which students can write using a specific stylus. During the progress of the examination, the invigilator can monitor the device status like battery health,

time remaining etc. in a separate device called epProctor. Once the examination duration is completed, the device gets locked automatically and does not allow students to continue writing.

The evaluation interface is user friendly and easy to use. The entire marking process replicates the pen-paper based marking system with advanced technology. After the examination, answer scripts are available in the cloud system and evaluators can do the marking online. A username and password is automatically generated for each examiner through the system. Examiners have to submit the marks through the key board or by mouse click. Totalling of marks and questions missed out for evaluation are taken care of by the system. The system also prevents the examiner from awarding more than the maximum marks for a question (specified in the template). Another advantage of this digitized process is the availability of the script with question-wise response. This makes it possible to assign question-wise marking to the evaluators, which ensures uniformity in evaluation.

This digitized process also enables the analysis process for measuring attainment of course outcomes using InPods. The course outcomes marked against each question are tagged to the responses of each student, along with the marks obtained by the respective student by means of the InPods system, which generates the outcome attainment report. Once the evaluation process is completed, the marks verification, tabulation, consolidation with adding the internal assessment component, and the final grade card printing will be done automatically using the SLcM.

**Limitations:** Adequate training needs to be provided to students and faculty to convince and update them for using the system. Additional training/mock test/practice sessions need to be conducted on request.

### **5.EvidenceofSuccess (200)**

The Epad examination system has been successfully initiated across all the institutions of MAHE except for postgraduate students. Adequate training/mock tests have been provided to the students as well as faculty members. Class tests/Sessional tests/University examinations and evaluations are also being conducted across all the institutions successfully. Students and faculty members have accepted the new system positively and are well versed in the Epad examination process. Arrangements for the availability of expert technicians as well as storage space for the Epads have been made. A system has been established in every institution to provide training and practice to use Epads, every time a new batch of students is admitted. Due to the introduction of question-wise distributed evaluation, the number of instances of marks change/revaluation has reduced. Another significant change evident due to the digitization of the examination process is the drastic reduction in manpower and paper consumption. Evidence on the success of SLcM and InPods implementation is yet to be seen. Overall the entire process of examination and evaluation has become transparent, smooth, efficient, error-free, fast and environment friendly.

### **6.ProblemsEncounteredandResourcesRequired (150)**

·Initially the students were not familiar with writing on Epad, hence adequate training and practice needed to be ensured for the successful implementation. The same kind of approach was required for the faculty members, who were new to the system.

·Since onscreen marking was a new technology the evaluators also needed to be trained adequately to adapt to the new system/technology.

·For the success of analysis of attainment of course outcomes using InPods, relevant information needs to be provided by the question paper setters. To achieve this, the curriculum needs to be reformed and the outcomes at different levels need to be identified, which in turn should be conveyed to faculty and students.

·Adequate training and dedicated staff have been extended for rolling out SLcM in all the activities related to various aspects of the examination process.

## **7. Notes (Optional) (150)**

### **Outcome**

With the plan to automate the processes related to appointment of the examiners and selection of question papers this system is unique and a trendsetter in India. This helps to achieve excellence in the examination and evaluation process and also comply with MAHE's environment friendly 'Go Green Campus' requirements.