

Tribute

ADVANCING EXCELLENCE: TRANSFORMATIVE MILESTONES AT SPICER ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY, PUNE

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Spicer Adventist University, Pune, embarked on a journey of academic excellence and institutional growth under the dynamic leadership of the third Vice-Chancellor, Dr. Sanjeevan Arsud, appointed on May 23, 2018. His forward-thinking and dynamic leadership have brought about a significant paradigm shift at Spicer. The following are key milestones reached during his tenure, which helped shape Spicer Adventist University into a successful academic institution dedicated to quality, diversity and success of students.



Hon'ble Dr. Sanjeevan Arsud, PhD
Vice-Chancellor, Spicer Adventist University
In Office: (2018-2024)

Academic Achievements

Since the inception of Spicer Adventist University in 2014, it has undergone a transformation under the steady leadership of Dr. Sanjeevan Arsud. He left no stone unturned to overcome the regulatory challenges. His drive to excellence and dedication resulted in the historic event of the first convocation on July 14, 2019, and the conferring of the degree.

The visit of the University Grants Commission's (UGC) team in 2019 for an inspection was a giant step toward official recognition of the university. Much of the credit for the successful visit is God's blessing through His servant, the vice chancellor.

The Office of Research and Innovation was established with a vision to develop a culture of research excellence among the faculty and students across all disciplines. Recognizing the value of encouraging scholarly contributions, cash awards were given to individuals for research publications. Additionally, the Spicer Adventist University Research Articles Journal (SAURAJ) with ISSN launched to provide a platform for presenting research findings, and it received ISSN accreditation, marking a significant milestone in the university's research efforts. The decades-old Spicerian magazine underwent a transition and now has an ISSN number, reflecting its status as an academic publication.

To guarantee compliance with regulatory requirements, essential committees specified by the University Grants Commission (UGC), the University Act, Statutes, and Ordinances were quickly constituted. In addition, the Maharashtra government approved the university's first statutes and ordinances. To demonstrate openness and accountability, the university's website is regularly updated to reflect all mandatory disclosures required by governmental agencies, statutory requirements, and the UGC.

Tribute

The Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) was a vital step in ensuring the university's preparation for the critical visit of the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) team in 2022. A committee was created to monitor preparations for the inspection, pointing to Spicer Adventist University's dedication to accrediting quality. A significant renovation of the facilities was completed, with a focus on enhancing the infrastructure to effectively meet the demands of the academic program. The NAAC team was impressed by Spicer Adventist University's combined efforts and attention to compliance, and the university received a good accreditation grade.

The Learning Outcome Based Curriculum Framework (LOCF) was successfully implemented as per UGC regulations, therefore laying the groundwork for an updated and outcome-driven educational approach. Building on this momentum, the institution began implementing the National Education Policy (NEP 2020) guidelines in the academic year 2023–2024, bringing its practices into compliance with the most recent developments in education.

A number of important initiatives were undertaken to improve the teaching-learning experience. Independent cabins and offices were assigned to each faculty member in each department to create a work atmosphere that was favorable to academic output. Funds from Adventist Risk Management allowed for the renovation of the B.Ed. department building, renewing the infrastructure to better meet educational demands. The Elder Maxwell S. Paul Computer Center was inaugurated with 40 new computers graciously donated by Elder Maxwell S. Paul with an annual scholarship endowment of Rs. 800,000, which enhanced student access to digital resources and assistance.

Efforts were made to bring in organizational improvements to simplify operations and improve administrative efficiency. Several significant offices and departments were formed to better meet the requirements of the institution. The Office of Human Resource, Placement, and Recruitment was created to monitor personnel management, assist job placements for students, and handle recruitment procedures, ensuring that the institution recruits and keeps top talent. An Administrative Assistant to the Vice Chancellor was appointed to offer critical administrative support and maintain the efficient operation of the Vice Chancellor's office. To improve academic control and leadership, Heads of Department (HoDs) were appointed for the B.Ed College and the Education Department. In addition, an Alumni Office was formed to promote alumni interaction and networking opportunities, therefore building relationships between the institution and its graduates while utilizing their knowledge and support for the university's growth.

In a significant development, the university replaced the old canteen, bakery, and dispensary with the new School of Religious Studies block, which includes Phase I and II classrooms and an office complex. In addition, the administration renovated the university auditorium and purchased new musical instruments for the School of Performing Arts.

Tribute

Recognizing the significance of comprehensive student growth, a campus gymnasium was built to encourage students' physical health and wellness. In addition, the playground was renovated and furnished, and cement seats, restrooms, and office spaces were added to provide a comfortable recreational area where students could relax and participate in extracurricular activities. It was the commitment to improve Adventist University campus community and the overall educational experience.

Religious Sphere

Spicer Adventist University Church participated actively in a number of programs of the Southern Asia Division and the General Conference, according to the schedule of activities to promote organizational cooperation. Also, through programs like the Youth Congress, Lay Congress, and other advisory activities, the institution was instrumental in encouraging church members' involvement. Spicer Adventist University Church made use of modern communication channels to broadcast live Sabbath services on weekends and other important events on Hope Channel India, allowing for a large audience and involvement. In addition, the church displayed a dedication to serving retirees, lay members, and the elderly by planning weekly Sabbath fellowship meals and offering transportation services, guaranteeing accessibility and assistance for every member of the community. The church invites distinguished speakers from around the world to preach during the 'Week of Spiritual Emphasis,' along with encouraging its students to organise and speak during 'Students Week of Prayer' These initiatives reflect the commitment to creating a lively and welcoming community atmosphere at Spicer Adventist University Church that encourages spiritual growth, fellowship, and community involvement.

The university recommended that the Senior Pastor attend the E. G. White Workshop, which was held over three summers at the Adventist University of Africa in Nairobi, Kenya. This initiative sought to improve pastoral knowledge and leadership skills. Mrs. Sharon Clinton, Assistant Pastor, has been appointed as the Southern Asia Division's representative on the General Conference Executive Committee from 2022 to 2025. Furthermore, Spicer Adventist University celebrated the ordination of Dr. Koberson Langhu, a respected faculty member in the School of Religious Studies. The Church allocated offices for the Assistant Pastor, Church Clerk, and Church Treasurer, allowing for more efficient operations and communication within the congregation.

Strategic guidance was provided for Spicer Adventist University Church's implementation of a Comprehensive Stewardship Plan, which ensured the Central Maharashtra Conference received tithes and offerings as per the policy. The church achieved financial stability as a result of prudent financial management, as evidenced by the existence of fixed deposits and the absence of outstanding payables. Furthermore, demonstrating a commitment to support Spicer Church, the Central Maharashtra Conference contributes 50% of the annual property tax, which strengthens the church's financial stability. Donations were solicited to purchase new audiovisual equipment, and contributions from Adventist Risk Management enabled critical renovations and repairs of the church and its premises for additional infrastructure for meetings and communion services. Sabbath School classrooms were renovated, drinking water facility was added and cement benches were installed for the benefit of the church members.

Tribute

Agriculture

Spicer Adventist University's farm was revived in 2018 after years of inactivity, which represents a major contribution to the university's sustainability. Donations of a kind made it possible to drill three borewells, guaranteeing dependable irrigation water supply. Produce from the farm currently serves as a significant component of the cafeteria and helps the institution maintain its food self-sufficiency. Moreover, new machinery was provided to improve agricultural operations and increase production and efficiency.

Other Achievements

Spicer Adventist University has implemented several employee-centric initiatives to cultivate a supportive and appreciative workplace culture. The introduction of morning worship sessions for faculty and staff, with strict attendance requirements, created a space for spiritual nourishment and community building. Recognizing employees' invaluable contributions, all staff members were presented with appreciation gifts and mementos, reinforcing a culture of recognition and gratitude throughout the university community.

The university addressed its employees' well-being and professional development by introducing wage adjustments and promotions for deserving employees, assuring fair remuneration and growth opportunities. To demonstrate a commitment to fair labor standards, sixty temporary employees were regularized, offering employment security and stability. In a considerable attempt to improve employee housing conditions, extensive renovations were carried out on eighty-six faculty and staff residences across the three campuses. Notably, old tin homes on the SASDA campus were removed and rebuilt by four duplex apartments with decent amenities and facilities such as a hall, kitchen, toilet, and two bedrooms. Each residence had essential utilities such as drinking water, which improved occupants' comfort and convenience. Despite the obstacles faced by the COVID-19 epidemic, Spicer Adventist University addressed its workers' health and safety by providing access to hospital facilities and giving prompt medical treatment and assistance during times of crisis.

Spicer Adventist University was confronted with unforeseen challenges during the unexpected COVID-19 pandemic. With the sudden imposition of lockdown measures, students living in the university's hostels were left stranded, unable to return home. Every effort to protect the safety and well-being of these students. Despite the logistical challenges, plans were made for the safe return of students to their native place and immediate action to offer essential requirements, including free food and lodging, to the approximately 300 students who remained in the hostels during the lockdown period.

Spicer Adventist University launched a thorough restoration project to renovate and improve the cafeteria facilities, which included the installation of new gas stoves, burners, wash basins, and utensils, as well as the creation of serving rooms with food heating capabilities. To expand food storage capacity, a new cold storage unit was set up along with necessary roof modifications to ensure structural integrity. To improve meal preparation and satisfy rising demand, a new semi-automatic chapati maker capable of making 500 chapatis in an hour was installed.

Tribute

A canteen service was developed, providing a diverse choice of food alternatives for students, residents, and visitors. Guestrooms for visitors were renovated. Recognizing the necessity of offering good living spaces for students, the men's hostel was renovated.

The transportation infrastructure of Spicer Adventist University has been significantly improved because of the generous gift of Pastor John Daniel and his family. Their gift of a brand new ambulance ensures staff and students prompt and dependable emergency medical care. The addition of a new Tempo Traveler also improves the university's ability to provide safe and comfortable transportation, facilitating student excursions, faculty travel, and other logistical needs. The university's logistics are further strengthened with the acquisition of a new goods carrier, which makes it easier to move materials and supplies throughout campus quickly and effectively.

A joint effort was made to maintain cleanliness across all three campuses, with a particular emphasis on cleaning and beautifying the surroundings. New roads were laid for the benefit of the campus residents. Funds raised through alumni donations were used to paint the campus walls. A wall was constructed to successfully contain and mitigate the effects of the stray animals entering the campus.

Finally, Spicer Adventist University has seen a remarkable transition, characterized by substantial successes and improvements in a variety of fields. From academic quality to infrastructural growth, community involvement to administrative efficiency, Dr. Arsud's strategic initiatives have moved the institution ahead, cultivating a culture of creativity, inclusion, and excellence. The unwavering dedication and commitment to Spicer Adventist University's vision mission will undoubtedly guide its continued success and impact in the years to come.