

BACKGROUND NOTE ON THE TERI UNIVERSITY

The genesis of the TERI University is rooted in the comprehensive research, consultancy, and outreach activities of TERI, a not-for-profit independent research institute recognized globally for its contribution to scientific and policy research in the realms of energy, environment, and sustainable development.

TERI was established in 1974, and by 1982 it had initiated research activities in the fields of Energy, Environment and Sustainable Development. These activities provided environment-friendly platforms to address a host of issues ranging from rural energy issues, to shaping the development of the Indian oil and gas sector, tackling global climate change across the continents, enhancing forest conservation efforts among local communities, advancing solutions to growing urban transport and air pollution problems and promoting energy efficiency in the Indian industry.

TERI has come a long way and is now a dynamic organization with a staff strength of over 800, drawn from multidisciplinary and highly specialized fields. Its offices and regional centres, equipped with state-of-the-art facilities, are involved in a diverse range of activities. TERI is the largest developing-country institution working to move society towards a sustainable future through training, capacity building and education.

Recognized as a deemed university by the University Grants Commission in 1999, this higher education arm of TERI operated initially under the name of TERI School of Advanced Studies, but was renamed as TERI University on 05 October 2006, when UGC regulations were relaxed..

Administration

The University has a Board of Management, which is responsible for its overall administration and control. The Chancellor, Dr R K Pachauri is the Chairman of the Board. The Academic Council decides the academic policy. The Council approves curricula, courses and examination results. It appoints committees to look into specific academic matters arising from time to time. The Vice Chancellor is the Chairperson of the Academic Council. The Finance Committee renders financial advice.

Structure

The University has evolved an organisational structure drawing on the research activities of TERI.. Besides the core teaching staff of the University, staff of TERI with Ph.Ds and rich research experience of working on projects in various areas function as adjunct faculty.

There are two faculties namely, the Faculty of Applied Sciences and the Faculty of Policy and Planning. The Centres and Departments under each faculty, at present, are:

Faculty of Applied Sciences

- Centre for Bioresources and Biotechnology
 - dedicated to promoting and advancing innovative research with emphasis on management of plant and microbial bioresources.
- Centre for Energy and Environment
 - engaged in research in the broad area of clean technologies to achieve energy efficiency and minimize adverse environmental impacts
- Department of Natural Resources
 - aims to advance and impart knowledge about the environment and natural resources, including their characteristics and dynamics, their economic and societal value, and their management.
- Department of Energy and Environment
 - Aims to advance and impart knowledge in aspects related to clean technologies, renewable energy management and especially in the interface between energy and the environment.

Faculty of Policy and Planning

- Centre for Regulatory and Policy Research
 - seeks to enhance and augment current understanding and implementation of policies and regulation to encourage sustainable development
- Department of Policy Studies
 - aims to achieve a critical mass of expertise and academic excellence that would provide a basis for influencing public policy and regulatory practice

Academic Programmes

At present, the following programmes are offered:

- Ph D
- M Sc (Environmental Studies)
- M Sc (Natural Resources Management)
- M Sc (Water Resources Management)
- M Sc (Geoinformatics)
- M Sc (Climate Change Science and Policy)
- M Sc (Plant Biotechnology)
- M Sc (Economics)

- MA (Public Policy & Sustainable Development)
- MBA (Infrastructure)
- MBA (Business Sustainability)
- M Tech (Renewable Energy Engineering and Management)

The academic programmes of the University integrate the research experience gained in TERI into the academic curricula to provide a practical and contemporary context to learning. Having begun with doctoral programmes in 2001, TERI University has gone on to offer various masters degrees since 2003.

The doctoral programmes and research centre around four basic themes: natural resources management, biotechnology, policy & regulation, and energy & environment. 78 students are currently enrolled in the doctoral programmes and 216 in the master's programmes.

The M Sc programmes (Environmental Studies, Natural Resources Management) started with the setting up of the Department of Natural Resources through an endowment from the Ford Foundation. These programmes are now in their seventh year. In 2005, the University was entrusted with the task of introducing a master's programme in Public Policy and Sustainable Development for mid-career civil servants of the Government of India; the first batch of students was enrolled in January 2006.

The year also saw the first batch of students inducted into the new MBA programme in Infrastructure. This is a unique programme catering to the growing infrastructure demands envisaged for India and has been supported by chairs from the National Thermal Power Corporation and the National Hydroelectric Power Corporation.

In 2009, the University has launched four new master's programmes – an M Sc in Climate Science and Policy, an M Sc in Economics, an MBA in Business Sustainability, and an M Tech in Renewable Energy Engineering and Management.

Collaborations

In February 2002, TERI University entered into a memorandum of understanding with the School of Forestry and Environmental Studies of the Yale University. Since 2005, with support from the VK Rasmussen Foundation, there has been a regular exchange of faculty and students between the two universities. The TERI University also has MoUs with the University of Iceland, Michigan State University, North Carolina State University, and Freie University, Berlin. These inter-institutional MoUs are aimed at facilitating a mutually beneficial exchange of students, faculty, knowledge, resources, and ideas.

The Road Ahead

The TERI University has been set up as an institution of higher learning to meet the needs of a rapidly developing India. , While it draws strength from the ethos and traditions of India, as a global institution it reaches out to source knowledge from across the globe. Its key strength also lies in the reservoir of knowledge, experience and research of the parent body, TERI.

TERI University has recently moved to an energy-efficient, green campus at Vasant Kunj in New Delhi. This marks the beginning of a new and exciting phase in its life, with many new programmes, supported by state-of-the-art teaching facilities and a vibrant academic environment.

Some of the strategic thoughts on the road ahead for the University are outlined below:

- i. Keeping in mind not only the national, but also the regional and global needs for development, apt programmes would be planned. The University would also look at a consolidation of the programmes on offer at present.
- ii. The University needs to develop as a center of excellence in one, or possibly two, areas. These could be Economics and Sociology. This kind of a focus would not only result in the development of master's degrees in economics/sociology, but would also attract eminent faculty in these areas, since they would be more challenged in their core areas. Economics and Sociology feed heavily into the multidisciplinary programmes that the University already has on offer, and the strengthening of these areas would naturally strengthen even the existing programmes. The University has already moved ahead on this thought in the area of Economics.
- iii. The recent rapid economic growth, fuelled both by local factors as well as a major inflow of global outsourcing operations, has increased the demand for quality manpower and is spreading the meager resources emanating from our higher educational institutions rather thin. TERI plans to launch a TERI School of Management. The focus of the School will be to equip students with requisite leadership skills while at the same time internalizing the high level of social consciousness and ethical behaviour being demanded in industry today. The MBA courses from the TERI School would include the traditional core management subjects such as Finance, Operations Management, Marketing; and in addition would include courses such as Carbon Finance and Green Budgeting, Green Estate Management, Environmental economics, Design of public private partnerships; etc. The commencement of the MBA (Business Sustainability) programme is a step in this direction.

While the University is at the start of its exciting journey, the richness of programmes that have been launched represent a refreshing flavour of innovation and a strong relevance for addressing the challenges of tomorrow.