

IIM Calcutta faculty write to ministry over concerns regarding institute

Synopsis

The student-teacher ratio at IIM Calcutta has worsened significantly over the last two years. IIMC now has 20-30 full-time faculty members fewer than IIM Ahmedabad (IIMA) or IIM Bangalore (IIMB), it says.



Internal funding for research projects and international conferences are discouraged to augment the annual surplus.

The IIM Calcutta Faculty Association (IIMCFA), representing over 75% of the business school's full-time faculty has written to the Ministry of Education (MoE), expressing "grave concerns about the current state of affairs at the Institute and its implications for the future".

In a letter sent to Amit Khare, secretary of MoE, on Wednesday, which ET has a copy of, the IIMCFA has sought the ministry's urgent intervention to "help address the decline of IIM Calcutta", highlighting in particular, concerns around the decline in academic and research environment, violation of due processes and established norms, harassment and lack of redressal mechanism and deceleration

of progress towards global eminence.

"These concerns have accumulated over the current Director's tenure, the result of a style of functioning that is arbitrary, discriminatory, and, having a very narrow vision. Though we have reached out several times to the Director and our Board of Governors, our concerns have been ignored or brushed aside with narratives of institutional change, which is supposedly underway, but not apparent to us," says the letter. Over 60 of the 76 full-time faculty members are part of this.

ET reached out to Anju Seth, director of IIM Calcutta for her response, but it was still awaited at the time of writing this article. An alumna of IIM Calcutta, Seth is incidentally the first woman director of the institute. She took over in November 2018.

The main concern in the letter is the "alarming decline in the academic environment of IIMC, with faculty and staff shortages, and reduction in spending on research" Claiming that over-centralisation has slowed down the pace and process of decision making under the current director, the letter says that only one additional faculty member has been recruited in the last two years, despite several resignations and retirements of faculty.

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Research funding has come down drastically and post-doctoral research fellowships have been discontinued. Internal funding for research projects and international conferences are discouraged to augment the annual surplus; externally-funded research projects have often been actively discouraged or their approval arbitrarily delayed, it adds

This communication to the MoE is the latest in a line of concerns that have been raised since last year. The board of Governors had set up an ad hoc committee last December to look into the representation by some faculty members.

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