



National Law School
of India University
Bengaluru

REPORT OF THE
SCHOOL REVIEW COMMISSION
2023-24



REPORT OF THE SCHOOL
REVIEW COMMISSION
2023-24

NATIONAL LAW SCHOOL
OF INDIA UNIVERSITY, BANGALORE

**FOREWORD BY HON’BLE DR. JUSTICE DY CHANDRACHUD,
CHIEF JUSTICE OF INDIA & CHANCELLOR OF NLSIU (NOV 2022- NOV 2024)**

The NLS School Review Commission (SRC) for 2023–24 presents a structured and thoughtful review of the University. The Report has been enriched by wide-ranging consultations with all stakeholders of NLSIU, including the students, faculty, alumni, professional staff, State Government of Karnataka and the broader legal education community.

Section 14 of the National Law School of India Act, 1986, mandates the appointment of a School Review Commission comprising three eminent educationists to periodically review the working of the University. Two Commissions were constituted previously, the last of them in 2007–08. The third Commission, following its appointment, undertook a meticulous and time-intensive process that involved engaging deeply with numerous stakeholders and studying diverse dimensions of the functioning of the University.

The SRC 2023–24 was chaired by Professor Timothy Endicott and comprised of Professor Kate O’Regan and Professor David B Wilkins as members. Together, they formed a panel of pre-eminent academics who have shaped legal education across three continents – UK, South Africa and the US. Their unparalleled expertise and global perspective have brought immense value to the work of the Commission. Between 18 and 22 March 2024, the Commission conducted consultations in Bengaluru, Mumbai and Delhi, meeting with diverse stakeholders concerned with NLSIU and legal education. The insights and recommendations they have provided in this report reflect their nuanced understanding of the challenges and opportunities in higher education, particularly legal education in India.

I am immensely grateful to Professor Poonam Saxena, Ms Zia J Mody, and Hon’ble Mr Justice Siddappa Sunil Dutt Yadav, who served on the Advisory Panel, offering invaluable guidance and support to the SRC. At the same time, the significant contributions of all other stakeholders, including students, faculty, and others, cannot be overstated. Their active involvement in the review process has ensured that the report addresses the complexities of NLSIU’s functioning in a holistic manner. The work of the Commission has benefitted greatly by the dynamic leadership of Professor (Dr.) Sudhir Krishnaswamy, Vice-Chancellor of NLSIU.

The report comes at a pivotal moment for legal education, both in India and globally. The legal profession is undergoing profound changes, driven by technological advancements, globalisation and evolving societal challenges. It is imperative that institutions like NLSIU adapt to these transformations while staying true to their core mission of promoting justice and consolidating

the rule of law and constitutional democracy. The purpose of the report is to evaluate the working of NLSIU, highlight key challenges, and propose actionable recommendations which can help the University remain at the forefront of legal education in changing, often polarised, times. The report identifies areas requiring immediate attention and offers a vision for future improvements that will shape the legal profession for decades to come.

I am confident that this exhaustive report will serve as a vital resource for law students, lawyers, judges, scholars, academicians, policymakers, and anyone with an interest in the field of legal education and its impact on society. The importance of the report transcends, in that sense, NLSIU. The insights within the document will undoubtedly help NLSIU chart a path forward, consolidating its leadership role in the field of legal education and fostering excellence across all its endeavours

I congratulate the School Review Commission, the Vice-Chancellor, Professor (Dr.) Sudhir Krishnaswamy, and all stakeholders on this remarkable achievement. It is my firm belief that this document will not only support NLSIU in its journey forward but will also serve as a guiding light for other institutions striving to advance legal education in India and beyond.

Dhananjaya Y Chandrachud



(Left to right) Prof. Catherine O'Regan, Prof. Timothy Endicott, and Prof. David B. Wilkins at the NLSIU campus, Bangalore.

ABOUT THE COMMISSION

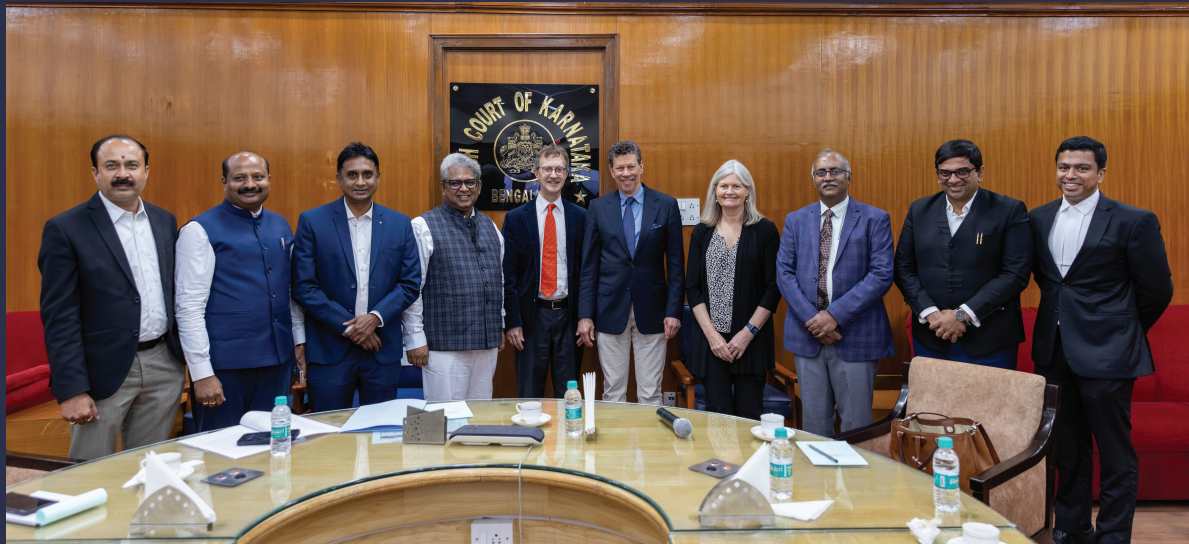
The School Review Commission 2023-24 ('SRC') has been appointed by the Chancellor of the University, the Hon'ble Chief Justice of India Dr. D. Y. Chandrachud, under Section 14 of the National Law School of India Act, 1986 to review the working of the University and make recommendations for the future of NLSIU and legal and policy education in India. The Commission comprises Prof. Timothy Endicott as the Chair, and Prof. Catherine O'Regan and Prof. David B. Wilkins as Members. This Commission brings together pre-eminent academics who have shaped legal education across three continents and whose experience and insight will help NLSIU reflect on our role and contribution to consolidating the rule of law and constitutional democracy in India.

THE COMMISSION

PROF. TIMOTHY ENDICOTT is presently the Vinerian Professor of English Law, University of Oxford and Former Dean of the Oxford Law Faculty for two terms, from 2007 to 2015. Prof Endicott was appointed by Universidad Carlos III de Madrid in 2016 to a Cátedra de Excelencia and was a Distinguished Visitor in the Faculty of Law, University of Toronto.

PROF. DAVID B. WILKINS is presently the Lester Kissel Professor of Law, Vice Dean for Global Initiatives on the Legal Profession, and Faculty Director of the Center on the Legal Profession at the Harvard Law School. Prof Wilkins' current scholarly projects include Globalization, Lawyers, and Emerging Economies, where he directs over 50 researchers studying the impact of globalization on the market for legal services in rapidly developing countries including India.

PROF. CATHERINE O'REGAN has been the inaugural Director of the Bonavero Institute of Human Rights and Professor of Human Rights Law in the Faculty of Law at the University of Oxford since 2016. Prof O'Regan's fifteen-year term as a Judge of the Constitutional Court of South Africa ended in 2009. Prof O'Regan has also served as an ad hoc judge of the Supreme Court of Namibia and Chairperson of the Khayelitsha Commission of Inquiry into allegations of police inefficiency and a breakdown in trust between the police and the community of Khayelitsha, South Africa.



A stakeholder consultation held by the Commission at the High Court of Karnataka, Bangalore with judges of the High Court, alumni who are senior members of the bar, and representatives of the Karnataka State Bar Council and the Advocates Association, Bangalore.



The Commission interacting with NLSIU students at a meeting held at the NLSIU campus.



The Commission at a meeting with staff representatives at NLSIU



Prof. Catherine O'Regan with members of the NLSIU alumni at a consultation in Taj West End, Bangalore.

To the Honourable Chief Justice of India, Dr. D. Y. Chandrachud
Chancellor of the National Law School of India University

Dear Chief Justice,

Having carried out the review of the National Law School of India University for which you commissioned us, we write to submit our report and recommendations.

We do so with a sense of fellowship with so many who have worked since 1986 to make NLSIU the 'model law college' that it was intended to be, and so many who are taking that purpose forward today. They include the students, the Faculty, the professional services staff, the representatives of the government of Karnataka, the Bar and the Bench, alumni, and of course yourself as Chancellor. We are deeply grateful to all of these members of the NLSIU community for their contributions to our review. We also benefited very significantly from the advice and feedback of the members of our Advisory Panel: Ms. Zia Mody, Justice Sunil Dutt Yadav, and Professor Poonam Saxena.

Our purpose is to portray the current working of NLSIU, and to point out challenges that the University faces today and for the future. We aim to make recommendations that may be of use to NLSIU as its leadership and all members of its community build on a famous legacy, to make it an exciting and collegial community, an ever-improving centre for education, and an ever-improving centre for scholarship in law, policy, and the social sciences.

Universities in the 21st century face daunting challenges. We have appreciated the realism and candour of the people who have provided us with feedback, and we do our best in this report to face up to difficulties and challenges, and to say what improvements are needed. But we can tell you from this first page of our report that, in our view, the prospects are brilliant. NLSIU is a flourishing community of gifted teachers and students, and has wonderful opportunities ahead.

We look forward with keen anticipation to seeing NLSIU become even better in future, for the good of its students and its Faculty, and also for the fulfilment of its focal purpose: to serve society.

Yours faithfully,

Timothy Endicott

Catherine O'Regan

David Wilkins

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS	13	CULTURE AND COMMUNITY	46
INTRODUCTION	15	1. Academic freedom	47
1. Previous School Reviews	16	2. Student discipline	48
2. Terms of Reference and Process for this Review	17	3. Complaints by students against other students	49
3. Stakeholder Consultations	18	CAREERS AND ALUMNI	50
NLSIU TODAY AND TOMORROW	20	1. Careers	51
DEGREE PROGRAMMES	24	2. Alumni relations	52
1. BA LLB	25	TOWARD A MULTIDISCIPLINARY UNIVERSITY	59
A. The humanities and social sciences elements	25	FINANCE AND INFRASTRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENT	61
B. Multi-section teaching	28	1. State of NLSIU finances	62
C. Admissions: The role of the CLAT	29	2. Infrastructural development	62
2. Graduate LLB	30	3. Governance	63
3. LLM	31	4. Fees and scholarships	63
4. MPP	31	5. Review and recommendations	64
5. PhD	32	GOVERNANCE	65
6. LLD	33	ASPIRATIONS FOR THE FUTURE	70
7. Professional and Continuing Education (PACE)	33	APPENDICES	73
8. Teaching matters relating to various degree programmes	34	Appendix A1	74
A. Student support: A new frontier	34	Appendix A2	79
B. Trimesters	36	Appendix B	82
C. Assessment	38	Appendix C	89
D. Mooting	39	Appendix D	89
E. Communications over administrative matters	40	Appendix E	91
RESEARCH AND FACULTY DEVELOPMENT	40	Appendix F	92
1. Sabbatical leave	42		
2. Fixed-term contracts	44		
3. Academic Fellowships	44		
4. Gender parity	45		

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The School Review Commission ('SRC') is empowered under Section 14 of the National Law School of India Act, 1986 to review the working of the University and make recommendations. The Commission began its review of NLSIU in June 2023 and submitted this report to the Chancellor in September 2024. The SRC visited India in March 2024 and held a wide range of stakeholder consultations in Bangalore, Mumbai, and Delhi to gain a holistic perspective on legal education in India. The key recommendations of the Commission are as follows.

ACADEMIC MATTERS:

- We recommend that the currently ongoing Curriculum Review act very ambitiously to enhance the role of the non-legal courses in the BA LLB. NLSIU should consider designing a foundation year in which the students study only non-legal subjects. The University should consider allowing students to apply for a major in a non-law subject, and for a minor in a particular area of the law.
- On admissions to the undergraduate programme currently conducted through the CLAT, we recommend that NLSIU work as a matter of urgency with the Consortium of National Law Universities, and with State and Union government agencies, to agree on a new framework for an Indian national admissions test for undergraduate law programmes that is professional and fit for purpose.
- NLSIU should continue to investigate interim solutions to ensure that admissions to the NLSIU are handled in a fair and transparent manner that results in excellent candidates being admitted to the degree programmes at NLSIU.
- We recommend that NLSIU change from three trimesters per academic year to two semesters, if the change can be made in a way that supports the University's purposes and does not cause unforeseen drawbacks for students or Faculty. If no change is made to a semester system, the University may consider shortening the trimesters to ten weeks each.
- NLSIU should consider establishing a position of Dean of Students to play a senior leadership role in student matters. The remit of the Dean of Students would include academic matters and communications with students on non-academic matters (except disciplinary matters).

RESEARCH & FACULTY DEVELOPMENT:

- We recommend that faculty members be able to apply for paid sabbatical leave from duties other than the duty to engage in research, at the rate of one trimester after six trimesters of teaching.
- NLSIU should build on the Academic Fellowship programme by creating a programme of Postdoctoral Fellowships.

COMMUNITY & CULTURE:

- We recommend that, through a process to be designed by the Vice Chancellor, NLSIU should re-articulate its principles of respect for academic freedom.
- We recommend the establishment of a standing disciplinary appeals committee, consisting of three members, chaired by a distinguished member of the alumni community, to be appointed from time to time by the Vice Chancellor.

CAREERS & ALUMNI:

- NLSIU should invite alumni to participate in the activities of the Careers Support Office. NLSIU should build an alumni database to allow students to connect with alumni across a wide array of traditional and non-traditional careers and to facilitate alumni mentorship.
- NLSIU should support specialised classes and research projects that provide independent and objective information to students and practitioners about the legal profession and careers, starting with a study of NLSIU's own graduates.
- We recommend that the Alumni Association be strengthened, and that every graduating student automatically becomes a member of the Association.
- NLSIU should consider the establishment of an Alumni Council, comprising a National Alumni Council and Regional Alumni Councils to foster engagement with alumni of the NLSIU.

FINANCE & INFRASTRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENT:

- The membership of the Finance Committee should be reviewed to ensure that the Committee has the benefit of skilled financial, accounting, investment and fund-raising expertise. It should also contain several senior alumni who will be able to support the continued growth of the NLSIU endowment.
- Careful attention needs to be given to ensure that students who come from disadvantaged backgrounds are provided with satisfactory levels of financial support through scholarships or bursaries.
- NLSIU should consider the establishment of a separate Audit and Investment Committee, which would develop and review an investment plan for the NLSIU. It is also important that NLSIU should have appropriate systems of oversight to review large donations.

GOVERNANCE:

- We recommend the establishment of a Faculty Council and an Alumni Council, along the lines explained in the report.
- We recommend that the Chancellor commence a process of discussion among the relevant parties, including the Vice Chancellor and other officers of NLSIU, its governing councils, alumni, and Faculty, the BCI, and the representatives of the Government of Karnataka, concerning reform of governance along the lines we have set out below, and also in light of the recommendations of the School Review Commissions of 1996 and 2007.

INTRODUCTION

The Chief Justice of India, Hon'ble Dr Justice D Y Chandrachud, in his capacity as the Chancellor of the National Law School of India University ('NLSIU'), Bangalore, in consultation with the state government of Karnataka, appointed us in February 2023 as Commissioners 'to review the working of the School and to make recommendations'.

The Commission is a statutory body constituted under Section 14 of the National Law School of India Act, 1986 ('NLSI Act'). Section 14 of the Act mandates the appointment of a School Review Commission comprising three eminent educationists to review the working of the University at least once in every five years.

1. PREVIOUS SCHOOL REVIEWS

Two Commissions have been constituted previously to review the workings of the University.

In 1996, an Expert Panel comprising Prof Marc Galanter, Prof Savitri Goonesekere, and Prof William Twining reviewed the University and advised on future directions, especially regarding its academic programmes. The Panel reviewed the period from 1988 (its founding) to 1996, which covered the first decade of NLSIU. It recommended that NLSIU should encourage the development of other national law schools and play an important role in the development of a national system of legal education. The Panel's report focused on the need for development of physical infrastructure (such as a library), strategies for retention of faculty, and the importance of instilling a sense of responsibility towards social justice in students. It recommended that the number of courses in the BA LLB programme be reduced from 60 to 48 courses. The Panel also suggested that the number of project submissions (i.e., evaluation components) in a trimester be reduced. On governance, the Panel recommended that the Faculty receive formal recognition as a decision-making body and that alumni should be represented in the Executive and Academic Councils. On finance, the Panel noted that NLSIU should maintain its diversity of funding sources, avoiding dependence on any single source.

In 2007, a statutory School Review Commission was appointed comprising Justice KT Thomas, Prof (Dr) Virendra Kumar and Prof (Dr) MP Singh. This Commission recommended multiple changes to the governance structures, including the replacement of nominees of the Bar Council of India Trust and the National Law School of India Society with nominees from academia, judiciary, and the alumni. With the Common Law Admission Test ('CLAT') being first introduced in 2008, the Commission also expressed its view that the exam ought to test critical abilities of reasoning, analysis, and application of mind, rather than testing the candidates' ability to memorise information. Responding to the concern that most NLSIU graduates were going into corporate law firms and not the bar or judiciary, the Commission suggested that the University increase its student intake so that there would be a larger number of graduates who would potentially enter diverse fields. It also recommended strengthening institutional engagement with alumni through the creation of a formal Alumni Relation Cell. On academics, the Commission recommended integration between teaching and the research centres at NLSIU, faculty exchange programmes, periodical review of courses and curriculum. It recommended accountability/appraisal mechanisms for faculty and staff. The Commission expressed concern over the apparent lack of discipline in the student body.

2. TERMS OF REFERENCE AND PROCESS FOR THIS REVIEW

The Commission's remit is very wide: as provided in the National Law School of India Act, 1986, the Commission is 'to review the working of the School and to make recommendations.' At the virtual meeting convened on 22nd June 2023, the Chancellor laid out a broad mandate for the Commission's review. The Commission was invited to review the functioning of the university over the last five years, from 2018 to 2023 and make recommendations for its future. The Chancellor elaborated on some themes and issues that the Commission may consider, such as diversity and inclusion in the student body, fostering faculty development, the need for more exchange between academia and the judiciary, and the opening up of diverse career paths for NLSIU graduates.

The Vice Chancellor, Prof (Dr) Sudhir Krishnaswamy, wrote a comprehensive and very helpful 'Report Prepared for the School Review Commission' on the current working of NLSIU and on plans for the future. It is available as a separate document. We recommend it for all who are interested in NLSIU; we will refer to it as 'the Vice Chancellor's Report'.

The SRC is to make recommendations to the Chancellor, 'after holding such enquiry as it deems fit'. To assist in understanding the context in which NLSIU operates, the SRC asked the Chancellor to appoint an Advisory Panel of three members. Below is a brief description of the members of the Advisory Panel to the SRC:



**PROF POONAM SAXENA,
FORMER VICE CHANCELLOR, NATIONAL LAW UNIVERSITY, JODHPUR**

Prof Poonam Saxena is a distinguished legal academic who has led the National Law University, Jodhpur as the Vice Chancellor (2013–2023) and was formerly the Professor in charge, Law Centre-II, Faculty of Law, University of Delhi (2007–2010). Prof Saxena holds degrees of LLB, LLM and PhD from the University of Delhi.



**MS ZIA J MODY,
CO-FOUNDER AND MANAGING PARTNER, AZB & PARTNERS,
ADVOCATES AND SOLICITORS:**

Ms Mody is among India’s senior corporate attorneys and is dually licensed to practice law in India and the United States of America. She holds an LLM from Harvard Law School, USA and a Bachelor of Arts (Law) from Cambridge University, UK. Ms Mody has served on multiple review committees constituted by SEBI, RBI and the Ministry for Corporate Affairs.



**HON’BLE MR JUSTICE SIDDAPPA SUNIL DUTT YADAV,
JUDGE, HIGH COURT OF KARNATAKA:**

Justice Yadav was appointed as Additional Judge of the High Court of Karnataka in 2018 and has been appointed as a Permanent Judge since 2020. Justice Yadav is a graduate of the 1996 batch of the BA LLB (Hons) programme from NLSIU, and was the first NLSIU graduate to be appointed as a judge of the High Court of Karnataka.

An introductory (virtual) meeting was set up between the Commission and the Advisory Panel on 12th March 2024. The Commission set out the advisory role of the Panel and invited them to attend the stakeholder meetings to be held between 18th and 22nd March 2024 during the Commission’s visit to India. The Panel members were present for some of these meetings in person and online. The SRC met with Hon’ble Justice Siddappa Sunil Dutt Yadav in Bangalore and Ms Zia Mody in Mumbai. Prof Poonam Saxena attended many of the stakeholder meetings via Zoom. After the stakeholder consultation process was completed, the Commission had an opportunity to meet the Advisory Panel (virtually) on 28th May 2024 to discuss the inputs received and some tentative recommendations, and we received their feedback on a draft of this Report. We thank them for their wise counsel and support, which we have found very helpful.

3. STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATIONS

A substantial portion of the review process consisted of stakeholder consultations within and outside NLSIU. The Commission consulted stakeholders at NLSIU and beyond, in the legal profession and academia, to gain a holistic perspective on legal education in India. All interested stakeholders were invited to submit their input for the Commission’s review through a Google form publicly available on the Commission’s webpage or via email at src.office@nls.ac.in. [The Google form questionnaire along with a summary of the responses received is annexed as **Appendix A**]

A letter from the Chairperson of the SRC, Prof Timothy Endicott, was circulated to all NLSIU students, faculty, and staff, announcing the Commission’s visit to India in March 2024 and inviting inputs for the review. The schedule for the SRC’s meetings with the students, faculty, and staff was also shared ahead of the visit.

The members of the Commission were in India from 18th to 22nd March 2024 and travelled to Bangalore, Mumbai, and Delhi to hold consultations with various stakeholders concerned with NLSIU and legal education generally. A brief overview of the meetings is set out in **Appendix B**. We found both the written submissions and the meetings with stakeholders enormously helpful. We express our sincere thanks to all those who participated.

The SRC Office received 61 responses through the Google form and 28 submissions via email. Individual stakeholder responses were kept confidential and accessed only by the Commission and the SRC Office.

Throughout the work of the SRC, the Commissioners have been supported very effectively and helpfully by the staff of our SRC Office, including three NLSIU Academic Fellows: Ms Aditi Rai, Ms Shivani Pegatraju, and Mr Rongheet Poddar. We wish to thank Ms Pegatraju in particular for drafting the parts of this report that describe previous reviews of NLSIU, and the process of our review, and **Appendix F** on the governance structure of NLSIU. We have learned much from Ms Pegatraju’s clear-eyed insight into many of the matters we address in this report.

II.

NLSIU TODAY AND TOMORROW

The National Law School of India University in Bangalore exists, as provided in the legislation that established it in 1986, ‘to advance and disseminate learning and knowledge of law and legal processes and their role in national development, to develop in the student and research scholar a sense of responsibility to serve society in the field of law’ (National Law School of India Act 1986, s 4(1)).

Chapter 1 of the Vice Chancellor’s Report sets out the history of NLSIU since its establishment in 1986 by an Act of the Karnataka Legislative Assembly. For most of its 38 years, NLSIU has pursued its purpose chiefly through the five-year BA LLB, preparing students for legal careers in a multi-disciplinary programme that includes an element of social sciences. Among many successes, the most notable and the most famous has been the high quality of the BA LLB students and the rigour of the education they receive. There is also an LLM and a small PhD programme. A Master’s in Public Policy was added in 2014. In 2019, there were 81 students per batch in the BA LLB, 49 in the LLM, 56 in the MPP, and 10 in the PhD.

Today, that pattern is being transformed.

The number of students overall has increased from 550 in 2019 to 1660 in 2024. The BA LLB annual entry has grown from 80 to 300 over the same five years. These changes are far more significant than any other changes since 1986. In our view, the changes are excellent and very promising for the future. The main reasons are:

- Given the scale of the need for outstanding legal education in India today, it makes sense for a premier law school to build a substantially larger student body.
- The expansion creates opportunity for growth and development of the Faculty, enhancing NLSIU's capacity to create a thriving legal research community.
- The growth in the cohort size for the BA LLB creates the opportunity for a very significant diversification in the student body. With no reduction in the number of students in the general class or the number of male students, there will be a significant increase in numbers of SC, ST, OBC, EWS, and PWD students, and Karnataka students, and women students. This is a significant levelling-up of opportunity at NLSIU.
- The associated growth in Faculty strength creates opportunities for enhancing NLSIU's teaching and research strength in social sciences and, thereby, forms a step in the transition toward a multidisciplinary university (see below, Chapter VII)
- There is good reason to think that admissions will be highly competitive after the expansion because admission to NLSIU is very keenly sought-after by the best students.

There are many further ways in which NLSIU has changed in recent years:

- A three-year LLB commenced in 2022 for students who have completed an undergraduate programme in a subject other than law.
- A programme of Academic Fellowships was established in 2022.
- Creche facilities have been provided to support academics who have children.
- The Writing Centre was established in 2023.
- Reservation quotas for EWS (Economically Weaker Section) and OBC (Other Backward Class) categories in the BA LLB programme were introduced in 2022.
- A Curriculum Review Committee was constituted for the BA LLB programme in 2023.
- The PhD Regulations were revised and a Doctoral Council, consisting of a Chair and Vice Chair, was set up to provide leadership to the PhD programme in 2023.
- An Alumni Office was established in 2021.
- The University adopted a new 'Digital Commons' platform at the University to create an institutional repository and ensure the systematic management of publication workflows for university journals.
- The position of Chief Operating Officer was created in 2022, to add professional expertise and leadership in non-academic planning and operations.
- A Master Plan was commissioned in 2021 to redevelop and expand physical infrastructure on campus.

These transformations are impressive, and, in our view, indicate that NLSIU is approaching the challenge of ensuring that it remains a leader in legal education in India with vision and dynamism. Yet, these transformations also create new challenges. Much of our report will concern how these new challenges can be met. Between now and the next School Review Commission, NLSIU will have a major consolidation to complete. The new and much larger five-year BA LLB will still be central, and the School will need to rework its teaching model for that programme. The development of the surrounding suite of graduate programmes will reshape the School.

And we hope that NLSIU will develop an entirely new BA programme, not directed at a legal qualification, that will run in parallel with the existing BA LLB. This idea is being considered by the current Curriculum Review Committee, with a view to the establishment of such an undergraduate programme in 2025. Such a programme will enhance NLSIU's research and teaching in social sciences and (especially) humanities. Those initiatives will be steps toward making NLSIU into a multi-disciplinary university for law, the humanities, the social sciences and the study of public policy. This major development will, in our view, better fulfil the founding purposes of the national law universities in India: it will put legal education in the context of the general study of humanity and society, and will serve society.

We should add that we hope that NLSIU will expand its collaborations with other leading schools in Bangalore through student and faculty exchanges, joint research centres, and perhaps even joint degree programs. In creating a new non-law BA, in particular, it might be possible for NLSIU to benefit from academic strength in non-law subjects. The project of constructing a fully multidisciplinary university will not be easy or quick, given resource and space constraints, and collaboration with other leading institutions in Bangalore may prove useful in building teaching strength in social sciences and humanities.

III.

DEGREE PROGRAMMES



The Commission at a meeting with the students of NLSIU held on the university campus at Bangalore.

1. BA LLB

A. THE HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES ELEMENTS

Professor Menon, the famous proponent of the establishment of NLSIU and its first Director, wanted the law students to study the law in the context of the study of humanities and social sciences. This idea was built into the five-year programme, although it took some time to develop. And it is clearly still under development: Professor Menon wanted the students to study literature, but the non-legal components of the BA LLB are almost entirely limited to history and social sciences. In the curriculum for the 2022 – 2027 batch, the students have core courses in Sociology, Economics, Political Science, and History for two trimesters each; almost all of these courses are taken in the first year. The upper-year elective courses are almost entirely in legal subjects. [The list of electives from 2018 to 2024 is available at [Appendix C](#).]

The non-legal courses in the BA LLB are central to the programme. It has never been quite clear whether their purpose is to broaden the minds of students by giving them an education beyond the law, or for students to understand the law itself better through understanding its social context. In our view, both purposes are highly valuable, and they are, in fact, complementary. It should be borne in mind, too, that the students' work in social sciences and humanities can serve as an advanced training in writing and critical thinking, which will be of the highest value for all students and will, in particular, build core skills for legal practice. Social science courses confer an understanding of social, economic, and political context that is increasingly important to clients, judges, and the law. As we heard from corporate lawyers and litigation lawyers looking back on their time at NLSIU, it is the social science courses that can prove to be most valuable. All of this will be even more important in the age of AI where recognizing the critical value of human interactions and institutions will be even more necessary. We encourage NLSIU to make sure that from the first day of the programme, students are given a very strong and concrete understanding as to why what they are studying will be valuable to their future careers as lawyers and will be an important opportunity to enhance skills in written and spoken English across the cohort.

The focus on social sciences and humanities in the programme needs sustained attention. In a highly competitive degree for aspiring lawyers, there is a standing risk that non-legal subjects may be sidelined or under-valued. The risk arises, first, because the value of non-legal subjects may not be instantly apparent to students who are intensely focused on equipping themselves for the practice of law. Secondly, the risk also arises because of the large array of legal subjects that a good law degree must cover, so that legal subjects predominate (there are 38 core legal subjects and only 8 core social sciences and humanities subjects, and the 18 electives are almost entirely in legal subjects). Finally, the risk arises because the balance of the programme inevitably means that studies in the non-legal subjects tend to be introductory, while the study of law develops from introductory to advanced study as students progress through the programme.

To meet the first point, NLSIU could consider making the first year of the BA LLB into a foundation year with no legal subjects, to enable students entering the five-year programme to put all their energy and ambitions into excelling in the non-legal subjects. This approach would mean an expansion of the non-legal element in the curriculum from 7 out of 12 subjects today, to 12 out of 12. Such an expansion is not as radical as it may sound, since at present the non-legal subjects count for only 8 out of 60 courses over the five years. Whether it is feasible will, however, depend on a careful accounting of the need for students to take the subjects that the Bar Council of India requires, and also the law courses that, although they are not required for admission to legal practice, the Faculty consider essential to the programme.

We also think the foundation year could be used to develop the sensitivity and skills relevant to working in diverse settings, a matter we also consider below. One of the ambitions of the expanded cohort size is to increase the number of places available to students from disadvantaged backgrounds, something we strongly endorse, but we also counsel that a more diverse cohort will require the development of appropriate skills in the cohort to work with peers from different walks of life. In our view, the foundation year is an excellent opportunity to foster such sensitivity and skills and in our view this should be one of the pedagogical goals of that year.

We should also note that the limited role of non-legal subjects, and the limited space in the curriculum for them, has a significant implication for Faculty: we heard from Faculty members in the social sciences that they feel some frustration given that the teaching in their disciplines is largely restricted to introductory courses.

Starting in 2026, the NLSIU Curriculum Review Committee has a plan to allow BA LLB students to take a ‘major’ within the social sciences, in History, Sociology & Anthropology, Literatures in English, Economics, or Politics (and if a new BA is established, students for that programme will be able to have a major and two minors). We are much in favour of this idea. It might also be worthwhile to offer minors in areas of law, such as business law (with electives in such subjects

as banking law, competition law, and securities regulation, perhaps with economics electives as well, perhaps in corporate finance), or human rights law, or in litigation. The feasibility and details of optional minors would need working out, but it seems to us that a student who opts for a minor ought to take at least two upper year courses (during the slots in the curriculum currently reserved for electives) in their minor specialty.

We particularly urge NLSIU to extend teaching in the humanities in future. The most striking added value would lie in the study of the Indian classical tradition of literature. But world literature, Indian languages and linguistics, philosophy, and fine arts would all complement and enhance the students’ education on the BA LLB. It would evidently not at present be feasible to allow students to opt for a major in any humanities subject other than History, but as the plan for major subjects is developed, we recommend that NLSIU move toward making majors available in other humanities subjects in future.

As for the legal subjects in the five-year programme, the range is impressive, and we are particularly glad to see that Law, Poverty and Development is a core course (since the founding statute of NLSIU adopts the object of learning ‘law and legal processes and their role in national development’ (National Law School of India Act 1986, s 4(1))), and that there are two core courses in Jurisprudence and two in Civil Procedure. We heard from alumni practising as corporate lawyers and in-house counsel that provision in commercial law subjects such as banking and competition law could be extended, whereas the litigating bar and the judges felt that students did not receive enough training in litigation advocacy and drafting. Those points should be considered in the current Curriculum Review. We emphasise, though, that the curriculum already gives the students a very broad education in the areas of law that every lawyer ought to master.

What we are recommending is a significant enhancement of the non-legal elements in the BA LLB. It would be a step toward fulfilling the distinctive vision for legal education that NLSIU established.

- **We recommend that the currently ongoing Curriculum Review should act very ambitiously to enhance the role of the non-legal courses in the BA LLB.**
- **NLSIU should consider:**
 - **Provision of elective courses in humanities and social sciences**
 - **A foundation year in which the students study only non-legal subjects, to enhance written and oral skills, and to develop the capacity to develop arguments based on evidence and sound reasoning**
 - **Ensuring that the foundation year provides appropriate guidance and training to students on how to work effectively and sensitively in a peer group composed of students from**

diverse backgrounds

- Allowing students to shape their programme by applying for a major in a non-law subject, and for a minor in a particular area of the law.

B. MULTI-SECTION TEACHING

With a student cohort of 80 (until 2020), it was possible to teach the entire year's cohort together for compulsory subjects. With a cohort of 300 (from 2024), it is much better to teach the year's cohort in smaller sections, rather than in an oversized class of 300. The plan is for sections of 60 (see Appendix D, 'Note on Multi-Section Teaching and Processes Followed'). Here is one of the challenges resulting from the growth and development of NLSIU: it is inevitable that students will wonder if they are as well provided for as students in other sections. That is a feature of every university course in the world that is taught in sections, and we found in our meetings with BA LLB students that they have a perception of variability in teaching. The crucial thing is to provide a form of teaching that is fit for purpose, so that the students in every section have the best education that NLSIU can provide. To give the students confidence in their programme, it should be as transparent as possible, to everyone involved, that this is the case.

Allocation of students to sections is for the most part random, with adjustment to secure a reasonable gender balance. Any such adjustment can and should retain a random element: each section should have a number of men and number of women roughly in line with the gender balance of the batch, and then that number of men and of women can be assigned to each section at random. This scheme should be explained in the student handbook for the BA LLB.

Faculty members are assigned to sections in a way that is meant to ensure that a section has a balance of more- and less-experienced teachers, and to avoid assigning a teacher to a section if that person has already taught the section another subject in the same year. And the teachers in a subject prepare a common course syllabus that is used in all the sections (although each particular Faculty member can assign readings that are not in the common syllabus, and can use their own methods, and they do not need to fit into a common ideological framework). For assessment, a common question paper for all sections is agreed by the Faculty members teaching a subject, and each part of the examination is marked by the Faculty member who set the particular question. We see it as a positive side-benefit that each student will be assessed in part by Faculty members who did not teach that student. But there would also be benefit – where it is useful – in a set of core lectures provided to the whole batch; in particular, it would give students more of a sense that they are in the same boat, and in addition it would be a more efficient way of delivering teaching that can be provided in lectures. Then the teaching provided within particular sections could focus more on the student's participation in class discussion. We say 'where it is useful', because this might depend on the subject in question, and on the teaching resources available in the Faculty (in terms of the focus of particular Faculty members'

expertise). And its feasibility would depend on the availability of a lecture room large enough for the entire batch.

- We recommend that NLSIU consider providing parts of the teaching for core courses in lectures given to students of the whole batch (it could be provided by a group of Faculty members taking turns to give lectures on particular topics). It should only be implemented where the Faculty members teaching the particular subject consider it to be pedagogically useful.
- The allocation of students and of teachers to sections and the core curriculum policy and the assessment policy should all be explained simply and transparently in the student handbook for the BA LLB.

C. ADMISSIONS: THE ROLE OF THE CLAT

The admissions process for the flagship BA LLB needs to be reformed. This is our only serious adverse conclusion concerning the five-year programme.

Since 2008, entry has been determined entirely by scores in the Common Law Admission Test ('CLAT'), a national law school entrance exam used by almost all the National Law Universities in India. It is very important to have a common test for national law universities (and there is no reason why there shouldn't be a single test for admission to all undergraduate law programmes in the country). But following extensive discussions with faculty, with alumni, and with academics from other universities, it is clear to us that the CLAT as currently designed is not fit for purpose. It is notorious that the quality of the CLAT varies from year to year. Some of the people we met suggested that the inconsistencies in the CLAT are so severe that using it as a basis for selection to law school is not only unreliable, but arbitrary. In the past, the CLAT has been produced by academics at a different national law university every year, as the task of setting the test rotates among the institutions that use it. There is an inherent drawback in such an arrangement: it commits the setting of the test to people who do not have professional skill at setting an admissions test, and who have not had the opportunity to develop experience at setting such an important test. But the national law universities now function as a Consortium (<https://consortiumofnlus.ac.in/>). The Consortium, however, has not established a professional, expert body to administer the CLAT, which, in our view, is one of the reasons that the CLAT is unsatisfactory. In our view, it is undoubtedly the Consortium's duty, to legal education and to the public, to produce a test that is fit for purpose. We understand that this is a duty that the Supreme Court of India has recognised. Given the role of the national law universities in legal education in India, it is a national problem that the CLAT is not professionally set. If, as some suggest, the results are arbitrary, the use of the CLAT may be damaging not only to law schools but also to the legal profession and the wider society.

Given that the primary responsibility for the CLAT currently lies with the Consortium and not the NLSIU we accept that NLSIU cannot, on its own, address the problem. We also accept that it may take some time to address the challenges of the CLAT. In the meantime, we recommend that NLSIU investigate ways to ensure that the admissions process is fair and results in the best students being admitted. We note that the Faculty at NLSIU have decided to introduce a pilot scheme of interviews in the next academic year, to supplement the CLAT, in determining admissions. We welcome the proactive manner in which NLSIU is seeking to ensure fairness in admissions, and we recommend that they continue to seek a solution to the problem in a fair and transparent manner. We note that since admission is to an undergraduate programme with no requirement of accomplishment in particular subjects at school, the national law universities could use any professional admissions test designed for general undergraduate admissions in India, and it would serve the purpose more effectively than the CLAT. But an Indian national admissions test for Law would be preferable.

- We recommend that NLSIU work as a matter of urgency with the Consortium of National Law Universities, and with State and Union government agencies, to agree on a new framework for an Indian national admissions test for undergraduate law programmes that is professional and fit for purpose.
- We recommend that NLSIU continue to investigate interim solutions to ensure that admissions to the NLSIU are handled in a fair and transparent manner that results in excellent candidates being admitted to the degree programmes at NLSIU.

2. GRADUATE LLB

This new post-graduate degree programme was established in 2022. The first cohort will graduate in 2025. Three-year post-graduate programmes of this kind have been offered in India from the early 1960s; in our view, it was a very worthwhile development to create such a programme at NLSIU. Because of the strength of its faculty and organisation, NLSIU has the opportunity to open an outstanding legal education at NLSIU to students who decide to pursue a career in law after pursuing a bachelor's degree at another university. And because the new programme will reach outstanding students who could not otherwise come to NLSIU, the programme will also enhance the NLSIU community. We commend the organisation, admissions, and curriculum of the graduate LLB programme.

The programme creates one special and significant challenge, which became evident when we spoke to students: it creates a need for new forms of academic support for students. For example, students who have done a bachelor's degree in science or in engineering come to the LLB without a background in skills of reasoning, argumentation and legal writing. Since the BA LLB is an undergraduate five-year programme, those skills are inculcated over a longer period of time, as the students are developing their studies in social sciences and law. On the LLB, students who

have not already learned the skills of critical thinking, essay organisation, and effective writing need to develop those critical skills in short order. We recommend focused academic support, ideally through discussion of a draft essay early in the programme for students who have not had experience of the sort of humanities/social science scholarship that would prepare them for NLSIU. The Writing Centre has a clear opportunity to assist with this imperative, but it is clear to us that LLB students need to be learning effective legal writing through their coursework too.

We also note that tuition fees are a great difficulty for some on the LLB; we believe that this aspect of NLSIU finance needs to improve, to make the programme as strong as possible academically.

3. LLM

The LLM is a well-established programme, and because of the high reputation of NLSIU, it attracts gifted students. We note that over the last few years, improvements in teaching and assessment in the LLM programme have been introduced. In meetings with students, we learned that after having studied at a variety of other institutions before coming to Bangalore for the LLM, some struggle with the volume of reading and with the academic standards at NLSIU. Any such struggle reflects something good about NLSIU, because it is undoubtedly best, especially at the graduate level, if students are put in the predicament of having to read a large amount of challenging material, having to answer hard questions in written work and exams, and generally having to attain high standards. But here too, as on the LLB, some new kinds of academic support might be useful. The form of support will be different than for LLB students, although once more the new Writing Centre may be a resource. We recommend that NLSIU consider giving PhD students and Academic Fellows / Postdoctoral Fellows a mentoring role for LLM students.

We think that while there should be one general LLM, NLSIU should consider making it possible to choose a specialisation and attain, e.g., an LLM in International Law or Intellectual Property or the Law of Taxation.

4. MPP

Introduced in 2014, the Master's in Public Policy is an interdisciplinary programme for students who have graduated with a degree in any subject. In 2023, enrolment in the one-year programme was only 24; it might be good to increase numbers in future, but we think that it is essential to maintain a very high standard of admission. The programme has been a significant step in NLSIU's evolution toward a multidisciplinary university, because it has formed the basis for recruitment of faculty members in policy studies and social sciences. But we think that this process is not complete; it was evident that there is some understaffing, and we think that NLSIU should consider further hiring for the programme.

The curriculum is very full, with four courses per trimester. If NLSIU moved to a semester system, it may seem obvious to have six courses per semester. But we would recommend considering a pattern of four courses per semester, to give the students an opportunity to delve deeper into each subject they take. And even if the trimester model is maintained, we recommend that NLSIU consider reducing the number of courses. Eight courses is more than enough for a one-year master's programme.

NLSIU should of course aim to compete with other MPP programmes in India, but should also see the programme as in competition with MBA programmes, since some career options that attract MBAs would also be attractive to MPP graduates. One important way to enhance the MPP will be to improve careers support, which is particularly important because the MPP graduates do not ordinarily pursue careers in legal practice.

In its short history, the MPP has yielded a mature community with 500 alumni. Alumni we met said that there should be more 'market-ready' electives, and that it is important to ensure that all students in the programme have access to the electives that they wish to pursue.

5. PhD

The doctorate in law can be a valuable element in the programme of studies at NLSIU: if successful, it will give NLSIU a framework for educating legal academics for the future, for a variety of law schools in India and abroad. Each doctoral project must involve the candidate's own, particular large-scale research project. Many such projects today involve interdisciplinary research, and the current multi-disciplinary capacity of the Faculty enhances the opportunity NLSIU has to enable future academics to develop careers.

At least four features are essential for a doctoral programme to succeed. First, it is essential to set a very high standard for admission, with the doctorate restricted to candidates who have the first-class academic qualifications that would gain them a place in doctoral programmes at the world's leading universities. That must inevitably make the PhD a small programme. Second, it is essential for each doctoral student to receive excellent supervision from a Faculty member or members with expertise that is relevant to the project. Third, each student's progress through the programme should be monitored at least yearly, through review of an outline and one or more chapters of the proposed thesis by one or two members of Faculty other than the supervisor. Finally, there should be a time limit for the PhD. But since each doctoral research project is unique and involves an original and novel investigation, the University has to be prepared to extend time when there is a good academic or personal rationale for taking additional time.

We welcome the fact that salutary improvements in the doctoral programme have been introduced in recent years at NLSIU with the aim of ensuring that these four elements are core to the NLSIU

doctoral programme, including the introduction of stricter admission requirements to ensure that only outstanding students are admitted, and the appointment of external, international examiners to assure quality and attention to the progress evaluations of students enrolled in the doctoral programme.

In our view, the admissions process for the PhD at NLSIU is very good, and NLSIU is clearly committed to a high standard in admissions. Academic supervisors do not get teaching credit for supervising; it is treated as an incident of academic employment that is separate from teaching stints.

The PhD examination requires three positive reports from external examiners, followed by a viva voce examination conducted by a panel comprising the supervisor, one other internal examiner, and one of the external examiners. Supervisor participation in the examination is a practice followed by some universities, but in our view, conduct of the examination by Faculty who have not supervised the candidate would tend to bolster objectivity in assessment, and it would also enhance the relationship between supervisor and student, by freeing the supervisor from responsibility for passing judgement on the student's success in the degree.

- **We recommend that supervisors should receive proportionate recognition for doctoral supervision as part of their teaching obligation or through relief from other duties.**

6. LLD

The LLD programme has the same thesis requirements as the PhD, but it is a higher degree: admission to the LLD programme requires a 'PhD in Law from a recognised University with minimum 10 years of Teaching and exceptional academic achievement in the field of law'. A small number of candidates are currently engaged in the programme, but NLSIU does not plan to accept candidates for the LLD in future. We are in favour of the abolition of the LLD. There is a greater purpose in focusing on equipping would-be academics to pursue a career in scholarship through a rigorous PhD, than in providing a higher degree to established academics.

- **We support the phasing out of the LLD programme.**

7. PROFESSIONAL AND CONTINUING EDUCATION (PACE)

We include PACE as a degree programme because it includes the Master's in Business Law, but there is also a large array of diploma programmes, in a variety of subjects including Environmental Law and Human Rights Law. Some programmes are offered in collaboration with private educational providers, and some in collaboration with public agencies. These programmes are part of a long tradition of distance education at NLSIU, which has given effect to the School's commitment to providing legal education broadly, and not only to its full-time student body.

The programmes have expanded recently, and provide 30% of the University's revenue – a massive financial contribution to the strength of the School. NLSIU plans to increase that revenue in future, subject to a constraint that the School 'cannot adopt or emulate the business models for executive education models of private universities as it is a public institution and must keep its offerings affordable' (Vice Chancellor's Report, p. 135). In our view, it would be entirely compatible with NLSIU's public status and purposes for some diploma programmes, and the PACE Master's in Business Law in particular, to be offered at market-based fees. First, it should be remembered that even though it is a public institution, NLSIU has always relied on fees from its degree programmes. Major revenue from executive and professional education programmes promotes its public purposes by relieving NLSIU from pressure to raise fees for the full-time undergraduate and graduate degree programmes. Secondly, the pool of candidates for postgraduate programmes for practising lawyers tends to be able to afford fees better than candidates for the full-time undergraduate and graduate programmes (although it should be noted that the capacity of lawyers in practice to afford fees varies widely, since some practitioners have significantly greater financial resources than others). So we think that there is a case for high fees on some PACE programmes (i.e., those for which candidates are able to afford high fees). We actually think that it would be more in line with the public purposes of NLSIU if it were not offering PACE programmes at artificially low fees to candidates who can afford market-based fees; rather than extending education to those who cannot afford it, such a policy merely extends a free benefit to those who could pay. We should add that where any qualified candidate for a PACE programme cannot afford fees, the problem ought to be solved by fee relief or loans, awarded on grounds of need.

- For PACE programmes designed for practitioners who have the necessary means, we recommend that the fee model should be market-based, with market-related fees subject to remission on grounds of need.

8. TEACHING MATTERS RELATING TO VARIOUS DEGREE PROGRAMMES

A. STUDENT SUPPORT: A NEW FRONTIER

The five-year BA LLB programme has traditionally given NLSIU a basis for setting high standards, and for equipping students to meet those standards. Today, it is clear to us that the growth and development of NLSIU is creating a need for a whole new approach to support students as they learn to attain high standards. The substantial increase in the number of students admitted to the BA LLB and the commitment to drawing students from diverse backgrounds as part of this process have led to a new and increased need for student support.

The growth in the BA LLB is bringing to NLSIU a new, substantially larger number of students from a variety of backgrounds, who have not been prepared at school for the demands they face at NLSIU. Students will increasingly bring very different levels and kinds of academic training to NLSIU, with its famous academic rigour. The academic skills and training imparted in the State Board, CBSE, ICSE, IB Diploma, and A level programmes vary significantly, with resulting differences in different students' preparation for writing essays, in particular. These challenges are particularly salient on the BA LLB, but we also heard from students on the LLB, LLM, and MPP programmes who found it difficult to adapt to academic expectations at NLSIU, when they arrived there from undergraduate education at other institutions.

A significant aspect of the need concerns the English language, and that challenge is closely related to the differences in academic preparation for NLSIU. The demands of the teaching model will disproportionately affect students from non-English speaking and marginalised backgrounds in academic performance. At present, the use of the English language at NLSIU is justified by the role of English in the Indian judicial system and in legal practice and in many aspects of public affairs nationwide. Language practices will evolve in the future. Use of regional languages in courts is increasing, and some people have advocated a variety of moves toward higher education in the students' mother language. But it is our view that there is (and will be for the foreseeable future) good reason for NLSIU to use English as a language of instruction. It is of great value for students of law and public policy in India today not just to understand English, but to use it with high proficiency. The consequence is that the School will, for the foreseeable future, need to support some students (and in particular, some socially and economically disadvantaged students) in meeting the challenge it poses.

We should add that it is not only English that will be a challenge with diversity. NLSIU will need to face up to other issues in managing cross-cultural, caste, gender, and religious diversity in the student body which may require careful attention. Students from non-traditional backgrounds have always needed support; they will be joining NLSIU in new and larger numbers, so that new and more organised forms of support will be needed. Both in respect of English language ability and academic preparation for NLSIU, the challenges arise from differences in family background and class and wealth, but also from differences in background between students with a rural or metropolitan upbringing. In future, it will not be enough for NLSIU to admit students from relatively disadvantaged backgrounds; they need to be equipped to thrive in their programmes at NLSIU. Teaching and assessment may need to be revised for effective education of a more diverse student body. The first principle should be that instead of relaxing its standards, NLSIU should assist every student to meet them. And a second principle of high priority is that students should themselves assume responsibility for their own learning, expecting NLSIU to support them in doing so, but not to spoon-feed them.

Faculty members and heads of degree programmes at NLSIU are much better placed than we are to identify the best ways to respond to the need. And students ought to be prepared to articulate their needs to NLSIU, and NLSIU should make necessary changes in consultation with students.

There has been assistance with remedial English language lessons at NLSIU for some time; the need is becoming greater, as is the related need for academic support on matters such as research methods, study methods, and essay structure. NLSIU needs to develop new capacity to offer individual mentoring and support to students. To meet the need, resources are not enough. It will call for intelligence and sensitivity, to avoid classifying students as in need of help in a way that involves stigma. The ideal would be for language support and academic support to be made available to students in a way that enables them to take charge of their own academic development and their success in their studies.

It may be worth considering a bridge course before the start of the students' first academic term in the BA LLB. One crucial question would be how to frame eligibility for students from marginalised backgrounds. Whether in a bridge course or during academic term, it is possible that upper-year students and graduate students could serve as mentors or tutors to students arriving for the first year of the BA LLB. It is possible that working with external programmes such as IDIA could be constructive.

Because of the current need for such support and our expectation that the need will increase, this is perhaps the most important need for change that we saw at NLSIU in our review process. If the School is to genuinely attain its aspiration to diversity and inclusion, it will need new ways of supporting the students' learning. But we should emphasise that in our view, the opening up of the most elite law school in the country to more students from disadvantaged backgrounds is an amazing initiative. If the initiative is successful, it will not only create new opportunities for people who would not otherwise benefit from the privilege of a challenging education at a high standard; it will also create a new, more diverse community, which will be of benefit for every student. NLSIU should be a torchbearer, and we hope that other national law universities will follow this example.

B. TRIMESTERS

With three trimesters per academic year, the academic calendar distinguishes NLSIU from all other national law universities. We understand that the calendar was designed in the 1980s, to solve the problem of compressing a three-year BA and a three-year LLB into a single five-year programme. The result is a very intensive programme with 12 courses per year (four courses per trimester).

We spoke to Faculty, students, alumni, and academics from other universities who said that moving to two semesters would be a significant improvement. There is a widespread sense (though it is not unanimous) that the trimester system imposes excessive burdens on students, and involves excessively frequent assessment (with exams at the end of each trimester instead of twice per year). It is very hard to do worthwhile clinical work in just a trimester. We understand that the system also poses difficulties for PhD students. For BA LLB students, trimesters create difficulties for internships with courts and in legal practice, since internships need to be short to fit into the short vacations.

In our view, the fact that there are three rounds of assessment in the year, rather than two, is the most significant drawback. It means that Faculty face frequent periods of marking. And students' engagement in learning is always in close proximity to an upcoming assessment. There is value in giving the students time for things to sink in, and time for preparation for exams. But with assessment every trimester, they are always having to think about completion of essays and preparation for an exam. We understand that the system can pose special difficulties for teaching and learning in non-legal subjects.

But we hasten to add that the transition would be difficult. We can point out advantages and disadvantages, but we cannot do the planning that would be necessary. If students simply changed to six courses per semester instead of four per trimester, they might well end up overloaded. If a Faculty member is currently teaching one course each trimester, NLSIU would need to work out how that allocation of teaching would translate into a semester system.

If, on the other hand, the change were accompanied by a reduction in the number of courses that students take in the year, we are not able to work out what the implications would be for the completion of subjects required by the Bar Council of India, and the further subjects that NLSIU makes compulsory, or for the availability of electives (we understand that students at the national law universities that have semesters take fewer electives). And transitional measures would need very careful planning and transparency and consultation with students.

We do very strongly believe that a reduction from three rounds of assessment to two would in principle be an improvement for students, but we are not able to work out what would be involved for students and Faculty in a programme of assessment on six subjects in a semester. So, although it is clear that there would be benefits in a change to semesters, it is also evident to us that hard choices and careful planning would be necessary.

Finally, if NLSIU does not change to a semester system, we recommend that the trimesters should be significantly shortened. In a similar system in Oxford and Cambridge, the trimesters are only 8 weeks long, which is admittedly very short; at NLSIU they are about 12 weeks long. It may be that

if the trimester system is retained, 10 weeks may be a better length. Longer vacations would give students responsibility for doing some self-directed work during the vacation. Longer vacations would also improve opportunities for internships. Shorter terms would mitigate the burdens of both Faculty and students.

- **We recommend that NLSIU change from three trimesters per academic year to two semesters, if the change can be made in a way that supports the University's purposes and does not cause unforeseen burdens or drawbacks for students or Faculty.**
- **We recommend that NLSIU develop a model of semester teaching on each degree programme, with consultation with students and Faculty. The purpose of the exercise would be to assess the impact of such a change on each programme, and to enable an intelligent decision.**
- **We recommend that, if no change is made to a semester system, the University shortens the trimesters (even this step would take careful planning and consultation with students and Faculty).**

C. ASSESSMENT:

A rigorous system of assessment is very much in the interest of students, as that is the only way to give them an opportunity to show their attainment. A rigorous assessment has been a hallmark of NLSIU. Any scheme of examination is bound to be stressful. While students need support and encouragement in meeting the challenges, it would not be an improvement if they did not face the challenge of showing how they can deal with the most difficult problems in the subjects they study. We say this because it needs to be borne in mind that the goal for a scheme of assessment at university cannot be to make it easy.

Yet it seems to us that the form of assessment for the BA LLB at NLSIU may put excessive demands on students and Faculty –not in terms of difficulty, but in terms of sheer quantity. It involves compulsory essay writing, a mid-term, assessment of participation, and a final examination in each subject. The resulting workload for Faculty is very demanding. It inevitably takes them away from other aspects of their job, and in particular from research. And for students, although a substantial amount of writing is undoubtedly a constructive part of a good legal education, it may be that the quantity of the writing at present is deleterious to the quality of the writing. A change to a single exam, for some subjects, might be an improvement. Or there could be a single final examination, complemented by assessment for engagement in class, in a transparent practice of calling on students to answer questions during class and recording marks to which they would have access or by arranging for them to give short, prepared presentations during class which would be marked.

Meanwhile, NLSIU has been taking deliberate steps to meet the challenge that artificial intelligence programmes pose to assessment. Programmes such as ChatGPT pose a dramatic and really grave challenge to the integrity of any form of assessment not conducted under controlled conditions. In a few seconds, ChatGPT can already produce answers to examination questions. The products of such algorithms are not currently at a high standard, but the technology is swiftly developing.

NLSIU is responding with a new and complex process by which term papers are assessed through continuous evaluation components, with specific marks for an outline, a rough draft, and a final draft, as well as a live interview on the finished work. NLSIU has also experimented with in-class written assignments as well as response papers written in a controlled environment. We note that such forms of assessment are potentially very useful. That is, they can give students challenging ways of showing their attainment, in a scheme that has integrity. It is important to be as transparent as possible with students, before each course starts, about the form of assessment they will face. And the new arrangements create the risk of adding to the very significant assessment workload of Faculty.

Term papers offer ways of assessing students' attainment that cannot be replicated in a two- or three-hour timed examination written under observation. But if the only way in which NLSIU can be confident that a term paper is the student's own work is through imposing undue burdens on Faculty, it would be better to assess the students through timed examinations written under observation.

D. MOOTING

We heard from students who think that there should be more support from NLSIU for mooting. And mooting seems to us to play a generally important and useful element in Indian legal education: the experience puts the mooters on their mettle, incentivizes deep research on a difficult legal problem, and instils crucial lawyer's skills (not only skills of oral presentation, but the crucial skills of dealing effectively with questions from the Bench, and responding effectively to the arguments of counsel for other parties). The students we spoke to have the definite impression that in external moots, their competitors – mainly, students at other Indian law schools – are more readily able to take time away from their classes and to rearrange assessments in order to prepare for and participate in moots. It seems to us that NLSIU is more demanding than some other universities in that it is less flexible in dispensing students from course obligations. On reflection, we have to say that taking classroom attendance so seriously is legitimate and, in fact, laudable. But it does seem to us that it would be highly advisable for NLSIU to support external, competitive mooting in other ways, including providing financial support to those who need it and being flexible about non-academic obligations.

E. COMMUNICATIONS OVER ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

In our meetings with students (chiefly in the BA LLB), some expressed dissatisfaction with administrative decisions concerning their studies, and some suggested that they had not fully understood the University's decisions on important matters of academic policy such as changes in assessment to respond to developments in artificial intelligence, and the coordination of teaching across different sections of the BA LLB. It appears to us to be important for the NLSIU administration to be communicative, transparent, and consultative on such matters, so far as is feasible and so far as is compatible with NLSIU governance and with data protection.

- We recommend that there be a single student handbook for each degree programme, and a single Faculty academic contact point for student concerns and complaints about each degree programme.
- Given the current growth and development, NLSIU should consider establishing a position of Dean of Students to play a senior leadership role in student matters. It would free the Vice Chancellor from such a role, which has in practice been carried by successive Vice Chancellors. It would also to some extent free the Registrar from the responsibility of responding to student concerns about campus and residential life.
- The Dean of Students would report to the Vice Chancellor and would be the single point of University-student contact for individual students and for engagement with student representatives, so that students know who represents NLSIU in its relations with them. The remit of the Dean of Students would include academic matters and also communications with students on non-academic matters such as accommodation, facilities, and catering (in fact, all student matters except disciplinary matters).

IV.

RESEARCH AND FACULTY DEVELOPMENT



The Commission at a meeting with the faculty of NLSIU held on the university campus at Bangalore.

Among the other transitions under way at NLSIU, the School is moving toward becoming a genuinely research-led University. By ‘research-led’, we mean a University in which students benefit from being taught by professors who, while teaching, are also making major contributions to legal studies through their scholarly publications.

Some brilliant scholarship has been produced by Faculty at the several national law universities since the 1980s and students have benefited. But there has not been a well-rooted or wide-ranging pattern of research-led teaching, not even at NLSIU, the leading law school in the country. One of our hopes for the future is that NLSIU will lead the way by creating and sustaining such a pattern.

In this respect, too, NLSIU is changing. The Vice Chancellor’s Report lists 34 books, 62 book chapters, and 110 journal articles published by Faculty members from 2018 to 2023. That is a very significant contribution to scholarship. It is clear to us that these publications are worthwhile and significant, although the volume of publications is not as great as at leading law schools in other countries. One rough measure of research success is publication in internationally leading journals (those are, of course, not the only venues in which good research is published, but the competition for publication in such journals is a rough indicator of the author’s success). On that measure, Faculty members are indeed publishing articles in the internationally leading journals in which any legal academic in the world would be glad to publish. But the number of publications in such journals is small. Our overall impression is that the scholarly contribution of NLSIU Faculty is at a high level relative to other law schools across India, but is below the level of some law schools that NLSIU should aim to rival (such as Asian law schools with a more established research culture, such as the National Law School of Singapore or Hong Kong University, and some UK, US, Canadian and Australian law schools).

The currently ongoing growth in Faculty numbers will be a success if the new appointees contribute to research-led teaching. In the past five years, overall Faculty numbers grew from 52 in 2018 to 89 in 2024. But because overall student numbers have tripled from 550 to 1660 since 2019, the recent growth in the Faculty will need to continue. It cannot be taken for granted that new appointments will enhance scholarship. Success in research publication ought to be a criterion of urgent priority in all Faculty appointments to academic positions. Research publication ought to be a requirement for academic positions, and success in research publication at an appropriate level ought to be a condition for all promotion decisions.

1. SABBATICAL LEAVE

Faculty members will have to be given the support and freedom that they need to publish research at a high level. We have a good impression of the culture at NLSIU, which certainly favours research. Support for Faculty to attend conferences appears to be helpful. But NLSIU Faculty have always faced significant teaching burdens, particularly because of the intensive BA LLB programme and its heavy assessment task. Reducing administrative and teaching burdens will be a significant change, and it needs to be accomplished if Faculty are to have the opportunity to contribute to legal scholarship.

In our view, a good programme of research leave would be a major step forward for three crucial purposes: giving Faculty opportunity for scholarship, instilling an expectation that Faculty will contribute to scholarship, and recruiting and retaining leading scholars. We understand that Faculty sometimes take what is colloquially called ‘trimester leave’, by arranging to complete a year’s teaching duties in two trimesters. That may be a useful way for a Faculty member to manage work obligations, but it is not research leave. It would be a significant step forward in scholarly accomplishment and in the developing research ethos of NLSIU if Faculty members were given sabbatical leave, available to those members who have a plan for meritorious research, and subject to accountability. Accountability would involve a report (with, ideally, information on publication of the research, or of plans for publication) to be submitted to the Academic Council. And a Faculty member might be expected to present the work done on sabbatical to colleagues in a faculty research seminar.

- We recommend that Faculty members be able to apply for paid sabbatical leave from duties other than the duty to engage in research, at the rate of one trimester after six trimesters of teaching (or one semester after six semesters of teaching, if the calendar is changed). Sabbatical research leave should only be granted if the applicant’s research plan for the period of research leave is approved by the Academic Council. A Faculty member who is granted sabbatical leave should be accountable for progress on the planned research during the period of research leave.

2. FIXED-TERM CONTRACTS

Wherever possible (and, in particular, wherever there is an ongoing need for teaching for one of the degree programmes) NLSIU should make permanent appointments to teaching and research positions rather than appointing on fixed-term contracts. In this regard, we welcome the fact that NLSIU has in recent years sought to appoint faculty on a permanent basis rather than on short-term contracts and we recommend that this approach be continued. Precarious employment puts the Faculty member in the position of needing to seek further employment more or less from the beginning of a contract, and creates a risk of loss of the academic freedom that is crucial to the University's purposes. Short-term employment cannot be ruled out to meet short-term needs (as, e.g., when a Faculty member is on leave), and a fixed-term position can be a very useful step into a career in the discipline for a junior academic. But there are serious drawbacks to any fixed-term position that does not lead to genuine opportunity for permanent employment.

Rolling one-year contracts, renewable at the discretion of the University, are a particularly precarious form of employment. This form of employment ought to be avoided, and where it is necessary, the Faculty member in such a post ought to be informed as early as possible whether their contract will be renewed for the next academic year.

3. ACADEMIC FELLOWSHIPS

These positions, established in 2022, have brought gifted graduates to NLSIU to work in law, social sciences, and public policy. The attraction of a Faculty position at NLSIU attracts excellent candidates. Some intend to pursue academic careers, and although the programme is not restricted to early-career academics, it has potential to make a substantial contribution to career development both for careers in NLSIU, and for careers in law schools in India and abroad. Three cohorts of about ten Fellows each have arrived in the first three years of this programme. We were highly impressed by these people. They add a valuable dimension to the Faculty.

An Academic Fellowship is a two-year full-time position, with responsibilities to 'assist the faculty in research projects and policy interventions', and to 'support faculty in the delivery of both on campus and off campus academic programmes'. All such activities are worthwhile, but these obligations are very challenging for the candidates, particularly for those who aim to build an academic career. A person who aspires to make an Academic Fellowship at NLSIU into a springboard toward a permanent academic post must find a way to publish their research in top journals while engaged in the Academic Fellowship. That is, at present, difficult because of the short two-year term, and also because of the non-research obligations to support delivery of research projects and academic programmes. By developing the two-year Academic Fellowships into three-year Postdoctoral Fellowships, NLSIU could make a more substantial contribution to the development of academic careers. A Postdoctoral Fellowship could still involve a teaching component, since developing teaching capacity is itself a step forward in an academic career.

But such obligations would have to be strictly limited to no more than one-half of the teaching commitment of Assistant Professors, in order to give a junior academic the opportunity to establish a research career.

We should add that the roles played by Academic Fellows are diverse, and some are involved in public policy projects. Indeed, we have benefited greatly from the support of Academic Fellows in this Review and in the compilation of this report. We do not propose that such positions should be abolished, but it seems likely to us that the creation of short-term positions by NLSIU (and in particular, by research and policy centres at NLSIU) may form a better platform for posts associated with particular projects.

We should also note that the current Academic Fellows would greatly benefit from improved office facilities.

- We recommend that NLSIU build on the Academic Fellowship programme by creating a programme of Postdoctoral Fellowships.

4. GENDER PARITY

The balance of men and women among faculty has improved significantly over recent years as NLSIU has done well with appointing women to junior posts. But by contrast, there are still fewer women in positions of leadership. Having improved its gender balance in hiring, NLSIU should aim to improve its record of promotions for women.

The total number of faculty at present is 89. 57% of them are women and 43% are men. Of the new faculty recruited in 2023 and 2024, 69% are women. Among NLSIU office holders, 7 out of 15 members are women. The details are provided below:

Deans: 2/2 are men

Assistant Deans: 1/2 is a woman

Chairs of Academic Programmes: 2/5 are women

Vice Chairs of Academic Programmes: 4/6 are women



The Commission met staff representatives from various departments of NLSIU during their visit to the campus.

V.

CULTURE AND COMMUNITY



1. ACADEMIC FREEDOM

A good law school must aim to instil in every student and every Faculty member the sense that their very wide freedoms of opinion and of expression give them a responsibility to think for themselves, to take a critical approach to others' ideas and their own, and to defend their conclusions. As a community, we can see that the students and Faculty of NLSIU share a commitment to the values (including the value of the rule of law, and the value of social development) on which the Union of India was founded and the hope for the future of India that inspired the Constitution of India.

Respect for academic freedom is essential for any university that seeks to thrive in the highly competitive international environment, because it will be impossible to recruit the best students and the best staff to a University where they feel unable to argue for the views that they hold. And the need for academic freedom is even more fundamental than that because the pursuit of the truth depends on it. NLSIU has a crucial responsibility to facilitate and to protect that pursuit, which means that it is not the role of NLSIU as an institution to choose among the opinions of its students and Faculty. The role of NLSIU in controversial social and political matters is to provide a forum in which each student and Faculty member is free to disagree with others and to defend their own opinion. And the role of NLSIU is to build a community in which each can learn from engaging collegially with those who take a different opinion.

In challenging times, when freedom of debate needs protecting in universities around the world, how can NLSIU build such a community? We note that NLSIU already has an institutional commitment to respect for freedom. The NLSIU Principles of Conduct (2002) (Appendix E, 1.5(iv)) include among the values of the University: 'Respecting the freedom of all, including their freedom

of thought, belief and their freedom to dissent; and exercising such freedom with responsibility not to harm others or impinge on their freedom.’ It is easy for an academic community to forget commitments that it has made as an institutional matter in the past. To renew its commitment to the 2002 principles, and to keep them in the forefront of a lively educational and intellectual culture, we think it is advisable for the NLSIU to consider adopting a new statement of those principles, designed to foster academic freedom.

- **We recommend that, through a process to be designed by the Vice Chancellor, NLSIU should re-articulate its principles of respect for academic freedom. This might well be an item for consideration at the first meeting of the Faculty Council that we recommend (see below, section IX).**

2. STUDENT DISCIPLINE

The National Law School of India Act, 1986 provides that the Vice Chancellor ‘shall have all powers relating to the proper maintenance of discipline in the School’ (s 18(4)(d)), and that ‘the final authority responsible for maintenance of discipline among the students of the School shall be the [Vice Chancellor]’ (s 32(1)), with the exception that only the Executive Council can impose ‘the punishment of debarring a student from the examination or rustication from the School or a hostel or an institution’ (s 32(2)), and only the General Council can withdraw a distinction, degree, diploma or privilege that NLSIU has conferred (s 31(1)). Disciplinary decisions on matters that are not matters for the Executive Council are decided by the Registrar on recommendation of a disciplinary committee appointed by the Vice Chancellor (**Appendix E**, ‘NLSIU Principles of Conduct 2002’). Any aggrieved person can ask the Vice Chancellor to review a decision of the committee or the Registrar, but the Vice Chancellor cannot interfere with a finding of fact. The Vice Chancellor’s decisions are final.

These roles for the Executive Council and the General Council are appropriate, given the seriousness of the matters for which they have responsibility. But the provision for the role of the Vice Chancellor was made for a much smaller University, in a different era. Today, the role of the Vice Chancellor has grown in its importance and in its demands as the University has grown. Today, the role of Vice Chancellor is one of academic and institutional leadership over a larger and more complex University. In our view it is no longer appropriate for the Vice Chancellor to review decisions of the committee and the Registrar. Such review ought to be conducted by a disciplinary appeal committee. This arrangement would relieve the Vice Chancellor of duties that can be well discharged by others and it would also have the incidental benefit of providing a form

of review that is at a remove from the Registrar, who works closely on so many matters of policy and operations. In our view, the disciplinary appeal committee should have three members, one of whom should be a distinguished alumnus, perhaps a judge or senior legal practitioner, and the other two should be legally qualified alumni or members of the faculty.

The National Law School of India Act, 1986 could be amended to institute such an arrangement. But in our view, it would be compatible with the Act as it currently stands, if (as we recommend) the Vice Chancellor appoints the disciplinary appeal committee, and has policy and structural oversight of all aspects of student discipline (and, of course, the power to propose changes in policy and structure to the Executive Council). The current provision that the Vice Chancellor ‘shall have all powers relating to the proper maintenance of discipline’ does not require that he make or review all disciplinary decisions.

- **We recommend the establishment of a standing disciplinary appeals committee, consisting of three members, chaired by a distinguished member of the alumni community, to be appointed from time to time by the Vice Chancellor.**

3. COMPLAINTS BY STUDENTS AGAINST OTHER STUDENTS

In our meetings with students, some expressed concern about the institutional response to sexual harassment and said that there is a burden on the victim in such cases. In our view, there is no alternative to due process for persons against whom complaints are made. But every such complaint involves serious welfare considerations for the complainant (and also, in some cases, for persons against whom a complaint is made). There ought to be counselling support for complainants and for persons against whom a complaint is made, and NLSIU must sustain a culture in which people feel that they can complain and receive support. Because of the residential nature of the student community, NLSIU needs to be prepared to separate the persons involved during complaint processes, without prejudice to the process.

VI.

CAREERS AND ALUMNI

1. CAREERS

One of the central goals underlying the founding of NLSIU was to produce outstanding graduates who would go on to lead impactful careers in every sector of the Indian legal profession. By any measure, the school has succeeded brilliantly at this core mission. NLSIU graduates can now be found at the highest levels in India's leading law firms, Senior Advocates' chambers, the judiciary, government ministries, the academy, NGOs and public interest organisations, and virtually every other important institution in the public and private sector, with many building careers that reflect India's growing power and influence on the global stage. Therefore, it is a key priority to ensure that NLSIU graduates understand this powerful legacy and have access to the kind of information and opportunities that will allow them to explore the broad range of careers that are available to them throughout their professional lives.

Indeed, this part of NLSIU's mission has never been more important – or more challenging. India's legal market stands on the precipice of tremendous change. Large-scale forces – globalisation and India's growing importance on the world stage, the opening of the Indian legal market to foreign firms, artificial intelligence and other new technologies that are transforming what lawyers do and how they do it, an expanding access to justice gap and threats to the rule of law – are creating both new opportunities and new challenges for lawyers and legal organisations. NLSIU has a responsibility to prepare students to build satisfying and successful careers in this new world.

Meeting this challenge will require providing opportunities for students to learn about how these large-scale forces are impacting traditional legal careers in the private and public sectors, as well as creating new careers at the intersection of law, technology, and public policy in areas such as cybersecurity and data privacy, environmental sustainability, and reducing economic and social inequality. This, in turn, will require even more attention to the placement process and to integrating information about the profession and legal careers into the curriculum. It will also require NLSIU to forge even closer connections with its alumni and with the legal profession more generally, including the Bar Council of India, to ensure that students, faculty, and administrators have access to up-to-date information about changes in the profession, and to be a constructive voice in helping legal organisations and the bar continue to evolve in ways that make them open and accessible to NLSIU graduates.

Making progress on all of this is especially important as NLSIU increases its entering class for the BA LLB to 300. As we indicate above, this growth in the size of the student body will yield important benefits – including answering one of the most common criticisms that both professionals and academics have raised in the past: that there simply were not enough NLSIU graduates to meet the tremendous demand for high quality lawyers. But it also presents important challenges.

Given that the demand for NLSIU's traditional output of 80 graduates far outstripped the supply, the school did not have to worry about whether its graduates would find jobs. Indeed, for much of its history the law school left the placement process almost entirely in the hands of student-led Recruitment Coordination Committees (RCCs), who contacted employers, collected student resumes, and oversaw the process of matching students to jobs. But as the student body has become increasingly large and diverse, the school realised that this informal process is no longer adequate.

In 2023, NLSIU took the first step towards institutionalising its recruitment mechanism by initiating a comprehensive data compilation and consolidation process. This effort included collecting detailed information on the existing policies, number and types of firms visiting NLSIU, salary packages, and student preferences for different career paths such as litigation, law firms, in-house counsel roles, and higher studies among others. This data-driven approach laid the foundation for a more structured recruitment process. Building on the insights gained from the documentation stage, NLSIU implemented a dual-channel approach to graduate recruitment in 2024. While continuing to support the student-led RCCs, the university established the Career Services Office (CSO) as a parallel channel for placements. The CSO's role involves advising and connecting students to long-term career opportunities, offering a structured framework for internships and graduate recruitment, and serving as a single point of contact for recruiters. This institutional approach has not only streamlined the placement process but also enhanced its credibility, aligning more closely with recruiters' expectations.

The new CSO has already made important progress, successfully implementing a rolling placement system for students across all programs that ensures that recruiters have access to talented candidates over an extended period. In less than a year, it has expanded recruitment opportunities beyond traditional law firms to include corporates, startups, and Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs), thus offering students a diverse array of career options. By 2025, the university aims to develop a robust pipeline of 300 to 500 institutions, ensuring students have access to an extensive range of career opportunities. Through this mechanism, NLSIU is not only adapting to evolving needs of the legal job market but also setting new standards for career services among Indian law schools.

This is a tremendous start, and we commend the Vice Chancellor and NLSIU's leadership for taking these significant steps to formalise the school's placement services. But we believe even more will have to be done to meet the challenge of giving all its students access to the information and opportunities that they will need to build careers in India's rapidly evolving legal marketplace.

First, in order to ensure that students have information about the full range of legal careers, the school should continue to expand its efforts to bring a broad and diverse array of practitioners to campus outside the formal recruiting process. Although some of these activities are already underway, we urge the school to expand and formalise these efforts in the coming years. For example, the school could institute a formal program for inviting practitioners to participate in panels in which lawyers from different sectors of the profession would talk to students about what they do and how they got to their current positions. By formalising this process and coordinating it with the new CSO, the school could make sure that students are exposed to the kind of new and non-traditional career opportunities that are less likely to be a part of the standard RCC process, which has tended to be dominated by law firms and legal departments that have formalised recruiting functions offering well-defined career paths and high salaries.

Indeed, the university should explore having someone in the CSO who specialises in interacting with potential employers in the litigating bar, government, NGOs and public interest organisations, and emerging areas such as legal technology to help students gain information and access to opportunities in these areas. Among many other kinds of activities, such a dedicated person might help to revitalise the school's historic connection to organisations that provide legal services to poor and rural communities that can give students the opportunity to do this work while they are in law school, and perhaps after graduation as well. We heard from alumni from NLSIU's early years that they had the opportunity to work in such organisations during law school and that it was one of the most meaningful parts of their experience. It would be terrific if the school could work with Karnataka State Legal Service Authority and similar organisations to offer students these kinds of opportunities. Similarly, a dedicated person in this area could also help to formalise the process whereby students apply for internships, particularly with judges and others in the government and public sector, which now relies on students to identify opportunities and apply, in ways that neither work for students nor for judges and other employers.

The school should also expand its efforts to bring a diverse array of lawyers to campus to participate in classes as guest lecturers in a particular class, or as full lecturers who teach seminars or classes with NLSIU faculty or on their own. Building these structured ways for students to interact with practitioners as a part of the formal curriculum reinforces the practical application of what they are learning in class, while also giving students the opportunity to learn about legal practice and legal careers in ways that will help them make their own career decisions. Practitioners who come to teach should also be enlisted in CSO's career panels and placement efforts generally. Fortunately, the school can easily find practitioners willing to participate in career panels and the school's teaching program by tapping into its alumni base. We heard repeatedly that many alumni would be eager to participate in a broad range of activities on campus to help students learn more about legal careers. Indeed, there was such broad interest that the school should

consider setting up a program to make it easy for students to connect with, and be mentored by, NLSIU's outstanding alumni. Specifically, the school could build a database of alumni who are willing to talk to students about their careers and to help give them access to opportunities, both for jobs immediately after graduation and throughout their careers. Such a database would be invaluable to students and, as we discuss in the next section, help NLSIU forge deeper ties with its alumni.

Finally, in order to ensure that NLSIU continues to provide its students, alumni, and the profession with the latest and most objective information about the changes that are reshaping lawyering in India and the world, the school should consider creating formal ways of incorporating teaching and research about the profession. In US law schools, every student has to take a course that provides at least a basic introduction to legal ethics, professional regulation, and careers. Similar courses are increasingly being created in law schools around the world. In addition, many law schools have also launched research programs or initiatives designed to study developments in the legal profession and to provide independent and objective interdisciplinary research on these issues to students, practitioners, and the public. NLSIU is uniquely positioned to join this trend by taking advantage of its unparalleled alumni base to recruit practitioners who could teach about the profession and participate in research studies on the profession, including documenting the careers of NLSIU graduates. Among many other benefits, such a study would demonstrate that where graduates begin their careers is often not where they end up practising five, ten, or twenty years later, and that skills, experiences, and relationships built in one area of legal practice, for example as an associate in a law firm, are often tremendously valuable later in a lawyer's career, for example as a member of the litigating bar or judge, or working in an NGO or in-house legal department.

This information would also underscore the challenges that graduates from NLSIU face in entering and succeeding in various legal careers. For example, we heard repeatedly from senior counsel, judges, and bar officials that they wished that more NLSIU graduates would join the litigating bar after graduation. But in talking with both students and alumni who have chosen law firms or other career options, it is clear that many students are dissuaded from joining the litigating bar by the fact that positions in even the most prestigious chambers often pay little or no salary for many years, precluding many graduates, particularly those from less privileged backgrounds, from even considering litigation as an option. Although NLSIU does not have the power to change this reality on its own, it can play an important role in raising awareness about this problem and work collaboratively with the BCI and other organisations to urge senior advocates and others in the litigating bar to pay their juniors a living wage.

Similarly, we heard from many students and graduates from underprivileged and traditionally underrepresented groups that they often have a more difficult time gaining access to good job

opportunities after graduation and succeeding once they are hired. As NLSIU's student body increases in both size and diversity, these challenges are likely to become even more pronounced. In addition to working with students from disadvantaged communities to learn the skills that their peers from more advantaged backgrounds are taught in the better resourced primary and secondary schools they have attended, or by their better educated parents, NLSIU can also help to document the challenges that diverse lawyers face in the profession and work with employers and bar organisations to develop programs and policies that address these issues. As we have indicated, the increased access and diversity that comes with NLSIU's expansion is a tremendous opportunity for an institution that seeks to embody the strength of India's large and diverse population. But with this opportunity comes the obligation to ensure that the school and the profession get the full benefit of this new talent by helping every NLSIU graduate reach their full potential both in their studies, and after graduation. Once again, engaging alumni – particularly alumni from disadvantaged backgrounds – in these efforts will provide valuable insight into which programs in this area are most likely to succeed in closing this opportunity gap, as well as helping graduates from these backgrounds forge deeper connections with the school.

We recommend that NLSIU

- **invite alumni to participate in the activities of the Careers Support Office, particularly to serve on panels so that students can learn about a broad range of career options;**
- **consider having a staff member in CSO that specialises in helping students learn about careers in the litigating bar, government, and other public interest careers;**
- **include alumni as guest speakers and lecturers in substantive law classes to draw connections between theory and practice and to help students learn about how practitioners engage with legal problems;**
- **build an alumni database that will allow students to connect with alumni across a wide array of traditional and non-traditional careers and to facilitate alumni mentoring students about career opportunities and choices; and,**
- **support specialised classes and research projects that provide independent and objective information to students and practitioners about the legal profession and careers, starting with a study of NLSIU's own graduates. This may highlight how NLSIU graduates have succeeded in every part of the profession, but also underscore the challenges (such as low pay for junior lawyers in the litigating bar and the underrepresentation of lawyers from marginalised communities) that NLSIU graduates continue to face as they seek to build successful and satisfying careers in the law.**



Law firm leaders at a stakeholder consultation held with the Commission in Mumbai



The Commission at a meeting with members of the litigation bar in Mumbai.



A stakeholder consultation held with members of NLSIU alumni in Bangalore.



The Commission at a meeting with law firm leaders in Delhi.



The Commission at a meeting with members of the NLSIU alumni in Mumbai.

2. ALUMNI RELATIONS

As indicated above, the success of NLSIU's alumni is among the school's greatest contributions to the profession and to India. These graduates are also a great source of strength for the school's future. NLSIU should do even more to capitalise on this unprecedented resource by finding new ways to engage alumni in the life of the school.

In addition to the recommendations made in the previous section, we also urge the school to consider new ways to engage alumni in the governance and financial health of the school. Research demonstrates that educational institutions where alumni play an active role in the school's governance and fundraising outperform those where the alumni are passive, or even worse, disengaged. This is likely to be even more true as public support for universities in India and around the world declines. Although alumni engagement must always be informed by core ideals of independence and academic freedom, the best institutions around the world are moving to find ways to help their alumni understand that they have an important role to play in ensuring that their alma mater continues to thrive in the face of shrinking public support, and in recent years, mounting public pressure that potentially threatens academic independence and integrity.

NLSIU has already taken steps to create this kind of engagement by creating a formal alumni association and launching a new alumni website and newsletter. Although an important beginning, in our discussions we learned that many alumni did not know about the association or the website and newsletter. We recommend that every graduating student automatically becomes a member of the Alumni Association, and that the NLSIU appoint a staff member with the specific responsibility of supporting the Alumni Association.

To raise awareness and deepen engagement, the school should consider creating even more formal and specialised structures for alumni participation. For example, NLSIU should consider creating an Alumni Council, consisting of a National Executive Council and Regional Councils located in major cities. Those who serve on these councils could be elected by the alumni, with the Chairs of each Regional Council serving on the National Executive Council along with some members elected at large. The Vice Chancellor and other senior faculty and administrative leaders could meet with the National Executive Council once a year to share ideas, insights, and updates about the profession and the school. Regional councils could sponsor events and facilitate engagement among alumni at the regional level.

This structure could also be used to facilitate fundraising drives among alumni to help the school meet its ambitious financial goals outlined elsewhere in this Report. Alumni, in turn, would be encouraged to facilitate connections between NLSIU and the organisations where they work or have influence to help broker larger institutional commitments to the school.

Regional Councils could help facilitate connections between the alumni and students and faculty, for example, by encouraging alumni to serve as mentors to current students and to participate in creating the alumni database. Regional Councils could also act as an easy resource for CSO and the administration and individual faculty members looking for alumni interested in serving on career panels, willing to be guest lecturers or teach their own courses, and who would participate in research on the profession.

Finally, creating this series of Councils would also help broaden the focus of NLSIU's new Newsletter from primarily being an outlet for reporting current events at the school to also being a place where the alumni share information and knowledge about their careers and what they are seeing in the legal market. This two-way exchange would in turn foster a greater sense of community among current students, faculty, and alumni and a recognition that all parties have an important stake in each other's development and success. To further this sense of community and shared fate, students should be given access to the Alumni newsletter from the day they enrol at NLSIU and should be enrolled in the Alumni Association on the day they graduate.

We recommend that:

- The Alumni Association be strengthened, and that every graduating student automatically becomes a member of the Association;
- That a dedicated staff member be appointed to serve the Alumni Association, and to be a point of contact for alumni at the University;
- That consideration be given to the establishment of an Alumni Council, comprising a National Alumni Council and Regional Councils to foster engagement with alumni of NLSIU.

VII.

TOWARD A MULTIDISCIPLINARY UNIVERSITY



The Commission at a consultation with legal academics and vice chancellors of law schools across India at the Taj Palace, New Delhi.

NLSIU has always required students in the BA LLB to study law in the context of the study of the social sciences and history. So, the University has always been multidisciplinary. New steps in the direction of a law-and-social-sciences university have already been taken, through the development of the Master's in Public Policy in 2014, and the associated strengthening of the Faculty in social sciences and policy studies. The proposed BA from 2025 will be another step. This direction of travel is in line with Indian government policy that single-subject universities should move toward 'holistic education' by 2030.

We learned that Faculty members who teach history and social sciences have sometimes found frustration in the fact that the teaching that is needed in (for example) politics and sociology tends to be elementary, since the students do not have room in their timetable to go on from introductory courses to advanced options. This aspect of the teaching programme across degrees has important implications: the MPP has already created opportunities not only for hiring more Faculty in social sciences and policy studies, but also for them to teach their subject in NLSIU at an advanced standard. The proposed opportunity for BA LLB students to take a 'major' in an area of social science will yield new opportunities. The move toward a multidisciplinary university will make positions at NLSIU into better career options for scholars in humanities and social sciences. And incidentally, the BA LLB will benefit as the enhancement of the social sciences in NLSIU will enhance teaching on the five-year programme.

Continuing the trajectory toward a multi-disciplinary university is the most promising way to secure research and teaching at the highest level in the humanities and social sciences. And we should note that, as explained in our earlier discussion (see above, Ch. III) of the humanities and social sciences component of the BA LLB, we hope to see a major opening up of NLSIU to the humanities more generally (whereas at present, History is the only area of the humanities with any significant role at NLSIU).

VIII.

FINANCE AND INFRASTRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENT

1. STATE OF NLSIU FINANCES

The Vice Chancellor's Report makes clear that the financial status of NLSIU has improved considerably over the last five years. In its first decade, the NLSIU often generated a deficit which had to be addressed by grants from both the State Government of Karnataka and the Government of India. However, over the last five years, NLSIU has been generating a surplus. In the 2022-2023 year, for example, its total revenue was Rs. 58.13 crores and its total expenses were Rs 49.35 crores, producing a surplus of Rs. 8.77 crores. This healthier financial situation has been a result of increased student numbers, the PACE programme and careful monitoring of expenses. More reliable and professional systems for the preparation of financial accounts have also been instituted, with financial accounts now prepared on an accrual basis, in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Policies.

In addition, over the same five-year period, the NLSIU has seen a considerable increase in its endowment. The endowment funds have grown by 25% over the past five years from Rs. 20 crores in 2018 to Rs. 25 crores in 2023.' Currently the entire endowment is invested in fixed deposit schemes. NLSIU considers interest from its endowment to be an important source of income to ensure its long-term viability.

2. INFRASTRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENT

Given the ageing infrastructure of the campus and the planned substantial increase in student numbers, NLSIU adopted a Master Plan for the development of the campus in 2021, which proposes significant upgrading of the built and digital environment on the campus. The process began with a significant renovation of the library which resulted in a light, spacious, and fit-for-purpose study and reading space for students that can accommodate up to 600 students in both indoor and outdoor seating. There has also been significant development of the digital accessibility of the library, partly instigated as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Another priority of the building programme has been to improve and expand the halls of residence to accommodate the larger number of students. Since 2021, the University has increased its residential capacity by 40%. Four new halls of residence are planned for the next four years.

Academic facilities have also been improved with the addition of a New Academic Block, the planned renovation of the Old Academic Block, and the renovation of the International Training Centre. A Student Centre and Sports Centre are also planned as is a new Faculty Centre as well as the construction of 25 houses off campus for faculty members.

The Plan also provided for substantial improvements in NLSIU's digital infrastructure, including a Learning Management System, an Enterprise Resource Planning, and a system of University ID cards for students.

One of the key challenges is the limited space for development on the current campus. To address this need, NLSIU has applied to the Government of Karnataka for the release of 13 acres of land close to the southern edge of the current campus.

NLSIU forecasts that this infrastructural development programme will require Rs 150 crores over the next four years, and although a small portion of this may be covered by fees, NLSIU proposes an ambitious fund-raising exercise targeting a range of donors, include corporate philanthropies, alumni and the Government of Karnataka.

3. GOVERNANCE

Clause 16 of the Schedule to the NLSI Act provides for a Finance Committee to manage the finances of the university. It includes representatives of the Bar Council of India, the Government of Karnataka and the State Bar Council. There are currently six members of the Finance Committee. In addition to the Vice Chancellor and Registrar, the Executive Chairman of the BCI Trust, the Chairman of the Executive Committee of the BCI, the Chairman of the Karnataka State Bar Council and the Principal Secretary of the Law Department of the Government of Karnataka are members. The Finance Committee may scrutinise the annual budget and make recommendations to the Executive Council. It generally meets twice a year. It is notable that there are no members of the Committee with professional qualifications in finance, investments or auditing, nor are there any alumni members.

4. FEES AND SCHOLARSHIPS

Fees for the BA LLB programme in 2022-2023 were Rs 3,27,815 per annum (with a discounted fee rate of Rs 3,23,815 per annum for students from Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes). Only 20% of students were afforded scholarships. Given that approximately 50% of places are now reserved for students from disadvantaged groups SC/STs and OBCs), the number of scholarships granted appears low. The current threshold for financial support is a household income of Rs. 8,00,000 per annum. In 2022-23, the total amount of financial aid to students was Rs 72,92,019 (disbursed to 58 students) and the total amount of external financial aid was Rs 41,11,780 (disbursed to 19 students). The total number of students who received financial aid in 2022-23 is 77, out of the total intake of 368 students. It is encouraging to see that students are provided with financial aid in this manner, but we consider that attention should be given to providing more financial support to students, and to annual review of the number awarded and the threshold for financial support.



The Commission visited the redeveloped library at NLSIU during a tour of the campus.

5. REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A successful global university needs a sound financial base and a professional system of financial accounting. We are satisfied that the NLSIU meets these requirements, although there is more work to be done, given the substantial infrastructural development that is under way. We recommend the following steps:

- **Finance Committee:** The membership of the Finance Committee should be reviewed to ensure that the Committee has the benefit of skilled financial, accounting, investment and fund-raising expertise. It should also contain several senior alumni who will be able to support the continued growth of the NLSIU endowment.
- **Scholarships and financial aid:** Careful attention needs to be given to ensure that students who come from disadvantaged backgrounds are provided with satisfactory levels of financial support through scholarships or bursaries.
- **Audit and Investment Committee:** It may be that a separate Audit and Investment Committee should be established, which would develop and review an investment plan for the NLSIU.
- **Oversight and approval of large donations:** In the contemporary environment it is important that universities have appropriate systems of oversight to review large donations. The reputation of a university can be seriously harmed by donations from donors who are reasonably perceived to be of doubtful integrity.

IX.

GOVERNANCE



The Commission at a dinner with members of the General Council of NLSIU at the Taj West End, Bangalore. (Left to right) Prof. Sudhir Krishnaswamy (Vice Chancellor), Sri. Srikar M.S. (Principal Secretary, Higher Education Department of Karnataka), Prof. Catherine O'Regan, Shri. H.K. Patil (Hon'ble Minister for Law and Parliamentary Affairs and Legislation of Karnataka), Prof. Timothy Endicott, Shri. Vishalaraghu H.L. (Chairman, Karnataka State Bar Council)

GOVERNANCE

NLSIU's governance structure is outlined in Appendix F. In 1986, the leadership of the Bar Council of India (BCI) took the initiative in creating this new kind of law school. The structure established in the NLSI Act, 1986 was designed as an arrangement through which the BCI could develop a new institution in collaboration with the Government of Karnataka (which would provide substantial funding for this new public institution of higher education).

NLSIU swiftly became a success in its mission and in 2024 it is a mature institution. It has grown and is growing. Most significantly as concerns governance, its Faculty has grown very significantly in seniority and in stature, and in numbers (from 12 in 1987, to 89 in 2024). And its body of alumni has grown into the thousands, including leaders in every branch of the legal profession.

The General Council, chaired by the Chairman of the Bar Council of India ('BCI'), includes all members of the Executive Council, and has more than 37 members. The BCI and its trusts nominate 19 members (some in consultation with the Chancellor). The Government of Karnataka nominates five members. The General Council was initially the supreme decision-making body; in 1993 (in the only significant change in governance since 1986), it became an advisory body. Its name ought to be changed to 'the Advisory Council', to signify its actual role.

The Executive Council, chaired by the Vice Chancellor, has 17 members, including the Chairman of the BCI and eight members nominated by the BCI or its trusts, and the Law Secretary of the Government of Karnataka and two members nominated by the Government of Karnataka. The Chairman of the Karnataka Bar Council is also a member, and there are three Faculty members, nominated by the Vice Chancellor.

The Academic Council, chaired by the Vice Chancellor, has more than 14 members; they include the Professors at NLSIU (there are currently 12 Professors excluding the VC and Registrar) and eight other Faculty members, five members nominated by the BCI and its trusts, and one nominated by the Government of Karnataka.

The Finance Committee (discussed above), chaired by the Managing Trustee of the Bar Council of India Trust, includes the Vice Chancellor and three members of the Executive Council (including one from the BCI and one from the Government of Karnataka).

A reorganisation of governance for the 21st century is, in our view, long overdue.

The previous School Review Commissions in 1996 and 2007 made recommendations for reform, which have not been acted upon. In 1996, the Expert Panel suggested that the membership of the Executive Council be expanded and that formal recognition be given to the Faculty as an important decision making unit in the institutional structure, and recommended a role for alumni in the Executive and Academic Councils. In 2007, the School Review Commission concluded that the nomination of members to the governing councils by the BCI Trust and the National Law School of India Society (trusts created by the BCI) had become redundant and required amendment, and recommended appointment of an alumni representative to the Executive Council, and recommended that the BCI should only nominate one member of the Executive Council, and that academic representation should be increased on the governing councils.

We must point out that over a period of more than 25 years, three successive reviews (for which there is a statutory mandate in the NLS Act 1986) have recommended governance reform to augment the role of the Faculty in the governance of a mature university. Nothing has been done. It is time for action to be taken.

There is still clear value today and for the future in sustaining the involvement of the BCI and of the Government of Karnataka. In the 1980s, their role was to build a new university and to set it on its path. Today and for the future, in our view, they ought to have the purpose of securing accountability to the legal profession and to the public. Now that NLSIU is a mature University, its Faculty ought to have greater responsibility for its governance. And its mature body of alumni, like the profession and the Karnataka Government, ought to have an accountability role.

The primary forum for the accountability roles of the BCI, the Government of Karnataka, and alumni, ought to be the General Council (which should be renamed as the 'Advisory Council' to indicate its role). The General Council was clearly designed to give the BCI a majority on the body that would be building the new University. For the future, it may well still be useful for the BCI to nominate a number of members (perhaps up to five), from different constituencies in the

profession (including judges and former judges, and practitioners), but there is no need for those nominees to form a majority. The Chairman of the Bar Council of Karnataka ought to continue to be a member. The Government of Karnataka ought to have three to five representatives. We recommend that the new Alumni Council (see above, section VII. on alumni) should also be able to nominate three to five alumni representatives to serve on the Advisory Council.

Faculty members ought to form a majority on the Executive Council, as they already do on the Academic Council. The BCI and the Government of Karnataka ought to be represented on the Executive Council and the Academic Council, so that they will have an accountability role in both of the governing councils. We recommend that the BCI, the Government of Karnataka, and the new Alumni Council should each have one representative on the Executive Council, and one representative on the Academic Council.

These recommendations should be considered in consultation with the BCI and Government of Karnataka. We hope that they will approach the question as a matter of their vision for legal education in India. Undoubtedly, that vision must evolve. The purposes of NLSIU today are just as was provided in s 4 of the 1986 Act (see above, section II). But the situation in 1986 (when there were various uncertainties about the development of a new kind of institution) was very different from the situation in 2024, when NLSIU is a mature University and, in fact, the leading law school in India. The basic principle is that NLSIU should not be governed by outside bodies, but should be accountable in its governance structures to the legal profession (through the BCI and through the Bar Council of Karnataka), to the public (through the Government of Karnataka), and to its alumni (through the new Alumni Council).

The ordinary term of office on the General Council, the Executive Council, and the Academic Council is three years (NLSI Act 1986, s 4, s 8, s 13). We recommend that the ordinary term of office on the General Council should be extended to five years, to take advantage of the value of experience for its advisory purpose.

The Registrar and the Chief Operating Officer of NLSIU (a position created in 2022) ought to serve ex officio on the Executive Council.

These recommendations will require amendments to the 1986 NLS Act. The Act should also be amended to establish a Faculty Council. All Faculty members (both tenured and untenured, and including anyone in a short-term contract involving teaching or research) ought to be members. The Faculty Council would serve as a consultative and advisory body and as a communications forum. It would not have decision-making power, but would be able to make recommendations to the Vice Chancellor and other officers, and to the Academic Council and the Executive Council. It should meet at least once every term, and should be chaired by a senior member of the Faculty who is not an officer of NLSIU. The Vice Chancellor and all other officers of NLSIU would attend

meetings, and would be expected to answer questions from Faculty members. Members of the Faculty Council, including the Vice Chancellor and other officers, would be able to propose items for the agenda to the Chair.

Finally, NLSIU should invite one student representative from each of the degree programmes to attend meetings of the Advisory Council and the Academic Council. The student representatives would not vote, and would leave the meeting for discussion of any issues reserved by the Chair of the meeting (which might be done for discussion of confidential matters, as, for example, when a matter of Council business affects an individual member of Faculty). This change, too, might be given effect in an amendment to the NLS Act. But meanwhile, it may already be possible and appropriate for the Chairs of those bodies to invite student representatives to attend meetings during discussion of matters that are not reserved.

We recommend that the power of the Executive Council in s 9(1)(b) to appoint a Professor without a selection committee should be repealed.

The continuing role of the Chairman of the BCI as Chair of the Advisory Council will be an appropriate reflection of the role of the BCI in establishing NLSIU, and of the importance of the links between NLSIU and the legal profession. The BCI's accountability role on the Executive Council and Academic Council will continue to reflect not only the leadership role that the BCI had in creating NLSIU nearly forty years ago, but its ongoing role in fostering the highest standards in legal education.

We should note the development in the role of the Vice Chancellor that is implicit in our recommendations concerning governance, and in other aspects of our report. The Vice Chancellor initially had a very hands-on role in all aspects of operations in NLSIU. Today, the great growth and development of the University require that the role should be one of academic and institutional leadership, in a sound framework of teamwork and accountability. The Vice Chancellor can no longer do everything. The main enhancement in accountability of the Vice Chancellor that we recommend is the establishment of the Faculty Council. In our opinion, the position of the Vice Chancellor in the Executive and Academic Councils and the General Council, if they are reformed as we have recommended, will be configured as it should be: the Vice Chancellor will chair the Executive and Academic Councils, but their membership will be broadly based so that all initiatives from the Vice Chancellor will need to secure wide agreement from stakeholders. And the Vice Chancellor will be a member of the General Council and the Faculty Council, and will attend meetings of the Alumni Council, but will not chair those bodies; they will be well configured for accountability, through their ability both to ask the Vice Chancellor for explanations of NLSIU policy and operations, and also to express their own conclusions as to the right way forward for the University.

Finally, we note that the periodic School Review Commissions themselves, provided for in the NLSI Act 1986, serve an important accountability function. The Act provides for them to be convened every five years. In its 38 years, NLSIU has been out of compliance with this provision: the current SRC is only the third review, and the first of the three (the 1996 review by an Expert Panel) was not actually a statutory review. We do not think that an SRC needs to be convened every five years, and if the NLSI Act 1986 is amended, that provision might be changed to provide for a review every seven years or every ten years. But NLSIU should certainly adhere to the provision, according to the letter of the law.

- We recommend the establishment of a Faculty Council and an Alumni Council, along the lines suggested in this report.
- We recommend that the Chancellor commence a process of discussion among the relevant parties, including the Vice Chancellor and other officers of NLSIU, its governing councils, alumni, and Faculty, the BCI, and the representatives of the Government of Karnataka, concerning reform of governance along the lines we have set out above, and also in light of the recommendations of the School Review Commissions of 1996 and 2007.
- We recommend that in future, NLSIU should comply with its statutory duty to hold periodic School Review Commissions.



The Commission met with all the former Vice Chancellors of NLSIU at a consultation in Bangalore. (Left to right) Prof. Catherine O'Regan, Prof. Sudhir Krishnaswamy (current Vice Chancellor), Prof Timothy Endicott, Prof. Mohan Gopal, Prof. NL Mitra (on the screen), Prof. A Jayagovind, Prof. R Venkata Rao, Prof. David Wilkins



(Left to right) Prof. Nigam Nuggehalli (Registrar), Prof. David Wilkins, Hon'ble Justice S. Sunil Dutt Yadav (Advisory Panel member), Shri. Shashi Kiran Shetty (Advocate General for Karnataka)

X.

ASPIRATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

Nearly forty years ago, NLSIU was established ‘to advance and disseminate learning and knowledge of law and legal processes and their role in national development, to develop in the student and research scholar a sense of responsibility to serve society in the field of law’ (National Law School of India Act 1986, s 4(1)). Over the last forty years, it has strived, and succeeded in large part in achieving these goals. NLSIU is famed for academic rigour. The challenge in the years ahead will be to sustain and in fact to enhance its commitment to high standards, through programmes that inspire students and equip them with the resources to take responsibility for their own thinking and their own skills. This inspirational aspect of legal education involves many intangibles. We hope that it can be promoted by the recommendations we make in this report. It must also be promoted by aspects of the NLSIU community that we have not been able to dwell on: a vibrant student culture and exciting activities (from sports to film to reading groups to theatre, dance, art, and literature), friendships made in the course of the hard work of the degree programmes, and very importantly, the personal example of the Faculty in showing the students the difficulty of the problems they deal with, and also showing how such challenges can be met, when each of us adds hard work to our resources of imagination and intelligence.

In our view, one of the key challenges for NLSIU in the years ahead is to cement its position as a leading university, not only in India, but in the world. Many of our recommendations have been designed with that goal in mind. We consider that NLSIU is well placed to achieve this recognition and that it is already well set on that path.

The importance of NLSIU succeeding in its mission should not be understated. Outstanding legal education which transmits the values of the rule of law and democracy forms part of the bedrock upon which successful democratic legal systems are built. The success of NLSIU in achieving its mission, therefore, is important not only for the students, faculty and alumni of NLSIU, but it is also important, as its founding statute acknowledges, for the national development of India, in the contribution its faculty, students, and alumni can make to ensuring that Indian democracy, founded on the rule of law, thrives in the years ahead.

Having been privileged to spend the last eighteen months reviewing the work of the NLSIU, meeting with its key stakeholders, faculty, students, and alumni, we are confident that NLSIU is well situated to meet the challenges of the future. It is our aspiration that the recommendations we have made in this report will assist NLSIU as it continues to strive to meet its crucial mission. In closing, we wish to thank the Chief Justice of India for conferring his trust upon us to carry out the work of the Commission. We have been inspired by what we have learnt about NLSIU and its broader community and we wish all associated with NLSIU every success as they rise to meet the challenges ahead.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A1

STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK FOR THE SCHOOL
REVIEW COMMISSION (SRC) 2023-24, NLSIU

* Indicates required question

1. Email *

2. Name *

3. Current Occupation *

4. Association with NLSIU (student, alumni, faculty, staff, former faculty or staff, recruiter, legal professional, government official, etc. - please specify) *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Student
- ☐ Alumni
- ☐ Faculty
- ☐ Staff
- ☐ Former Faculty/Staff
- ☐ Recruiter
- ☐ Legal professional
- ☐ Government Official
- ☐ Other: _____

5. Year of Last Association (Graduating Year, Retirement/Resignation Year etc.) *

6. When was the last time you visited NLSIU? *

Academics & Research

7. How do you assess the curriculum of the courses at NLSIU?

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ 5 - Excellent
- ☐ 4- Very Good
- ☐ 3- Good
- ☐ 2- Fair
- ☐ 1- Poor

8. How do you assess the pedagogy at NLSIU?

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ 5 - Excellent
- ☐ 4- Very Good
- ☐ 3- Good
- ☐ 2- Average
- ☐ 1- Below Average

9. How do you assess the quality of research undertaken at NLSIU?

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ 5- Excellent
☐ 4- Very Good
☐ 3- Good
☐ 2 - Average
☐ 1- Below Average

10. Briefly explain the reasons for your evaluation above. What specific areas should NLSIU prioritize in terms of academic development? *

Graduate Outcomes

11. How do you assess the performance of University students in their professions?

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ 5 - Excellent
☐ 4 - Very Good
☐ 3 - Good
☐ 2- Average
☐ 1- Below Average

12. Briefly explain your reasons. What should the University do towards their holistic development? *

Faculty

13. How would you assess the University's faculty?

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ 5- Excellent
☐ 4- Very Good
☐ 3 - Good
☐ 2 - Average
☐ 1 - Below Average

14. Briefly explain your reasons. *

15. To what extent do you think NLSIU has achieved its vision? Please score on the scale given below.

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ 5- Excellent
☐ 4- Very Good
☐ 3 - Good
☐ 2- Average
☐ 1 - Below Average

16. Briefly explain your reasons. *

17. Any additional comments or suggestions

This content is neither created nor endorsed by Google.

Google Forms

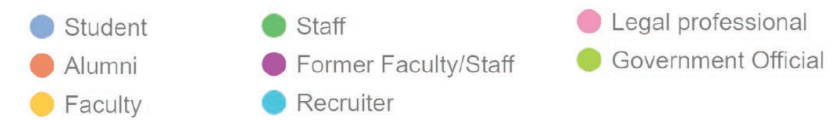
APPENDIX A2

SUMMARY OF STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK RECEIVED VIA GOOGLE FORM

Association with NLSIU

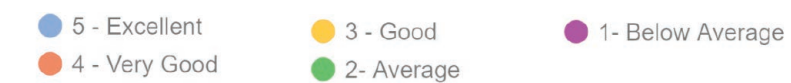
(student, alumni, faculty, staff, former faculty or staff, recruiter, legal professional, government official, etc. - please specify)

61 RESPONSES



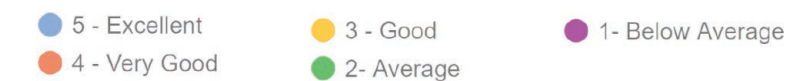
How do you assess the curriculum of the courses at NLSIU?

61 RESPONSES



How do you assess the pedagogy at NLSIU?

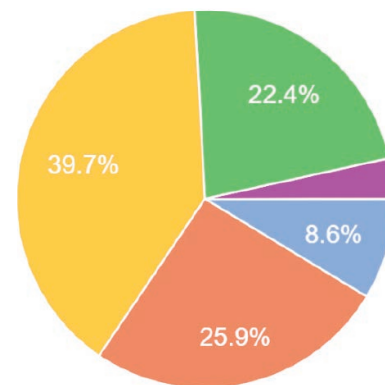
61 RESPONSES



How do you assess the quality of research undertaken at NLSIU?

58 RESPONSES

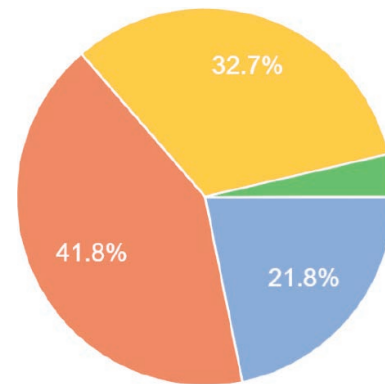
5 - Excellent
4 - Very Good
3 - Good
2 - Average
1 - Below Average



How do you assess the performance of University students in their professions

55 RESPONSES

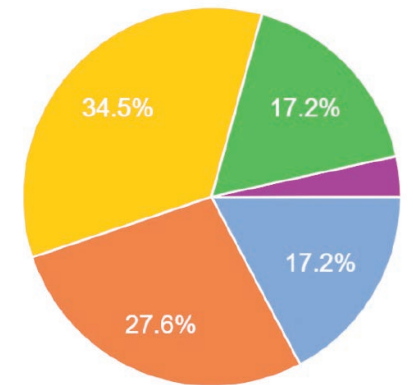
5 - Excellent
4 - Very Good
3 - Good
2 - Average
1 - Below Average



How would you assess the University's faculty?

58 RESPONSES

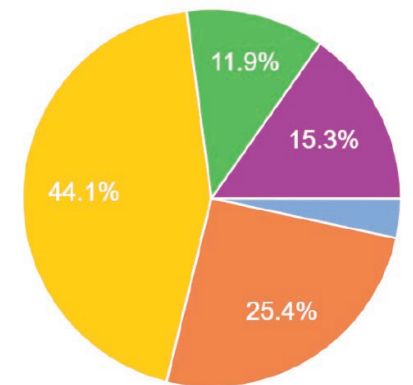
5 - Excellent
4 - Very Good
3 - Good
2 - Average
1 - Below Average



To what extent do you think NLSIU has achieved its vision?
Please score on the scale given below.

59 RESPONSES

5 - Excellent
4 - Very Good
3 - Good
2 - Average
1 - Below Average



APPENDIX B

BRIEF OVERVIEW OF STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS IN MARCH 2024

18th March 2024: Bangalore

The Commission visited the NLSIU campus on 18th and 19th March 2024 and held consultations with the students, faculty, and staff. All members of the faculty and the student body were invited to share their reflections and suggestions with the SRC. The SRC met with staff representatives from various departments at NLSIU, including People & Culture, the Research Office, Academic Administration Department, Finance Office, PACE, and the Research Centres. The University hosted a dinner for the Commission to meet with members of the NLSIU Executive Council and key stakeholders from the Government of Karnataka. The attendees included Justice S. Sunil Dutt Yadav, Member of the Advisory Panel; Sri H. K. Patil, the Hon'ble Minister for Law and Parliamentary Affairs; Mr. Shashi Kiran Shetty, Advocate General; Sri. Srikar M.S, Principal Secretary, Department of Higher Education; and Shri. Vishalaraghu H.L., Chairman, Karnataka State Bar Council.

19th March 2024: Bangalore

On the second day, the Commission held a consultation with NLSIU alumni based in Bangalore and invited them to share their views on the development of the University. The alumni included a wide range of people from corporate law firm partners, senior advocates, academics, entrepreneurs in legal tech, public policy advisors, and activists.

The SRC also held a meeting with all the former Vice Chancellors of NLSIU to hear their reflections on the evolution of the University and recommendations for its future. It was a memorable moment in the institutional history of NLSIU to have all those who have served as heads of NLSIU, with the sole exception of the much-honoured Professor Menon, who is deceased, convene for this meeting.

The Commission held small group meetings with faculty representatives (the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the academic programmes) and student body representatives. These meetings allowed for a more detailed discussion on the academic matters and student affairs at the University.

The High Court of Karnataka hosted a reception for the School Review Commission where the SRC had the opportunity to interact with the Hon'ble Chief Justice of Karnataka and other distinguished judges of the High Court, including Justice S. Sunil Dutt Yadav (member of the Advisory Panel to the SRC) and judges who are alumni of the University. The Hon'ble Chief Justice of Karnataka shared his inputs on the need for more collaboration between the bar,

bench, and academia. NLS alumni who are senior members of the bar also weighed in on this discussion to suggest avenues for collaboration and growth.

20th March 2024: Mumbai

In Mumbai, the Commission consulted with leading partners at the top law firms and senior counsel at corporate houses. The meeting included stakeholders in the regulatory governance sector including senior officials from the Securities and Exchange Board of India. The Commission heard from them on the rapidly evolving nature of the legal and regulatory sectors and how universities can best prepare their graduates to enter such dynamic fields. The SRC also had the opportunity to have a detailed closed-door conversation with Ms. Zia Mody who is a member of the Advisory Panel to the SRC.

The Bombay High Court hosted an elaborate reception and high tea for the Commission where the Hon'ble Chief Justice and several distinguished judges of the High Court shared their reflections on legal education and the legal profession. The Commission also met alumni based in Mumbai and members of the litigation bar and discussed the need to expose graduates to the wide range of career paths available to them beyond the conventional ones in law firm practice.

21st March 2024: Delhi

In Delhi, the Commission held a consultation with the founding partners of top law firms and senior counsel in the corporate sector. The discussion spanned various issues, from the importance of emphasising ethics in legal education to the impact of AI on the legal profession. The SRC held a meeting with eminent legal academics and leaders of public and private law schools in the country. The Commission had an engaging discussion with them on the role of law schools in upholding the rule of law and on improving access to legal education for a wider section of society. The SRC also met a wide range of NLS alumni based in Delhi who offered their reflections on alumni engagement and support for the university as well as the suggestions on updating curriculum and pedagogy. The Commission also attended a dinner hosted by the Chancellor, the Hon'ble Chief Justice of India Dr. D. Y. Chandrachud, on the final day of the stakeholder consultations.

APPENDIX B

LIST OF ATTENDEES FOR STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS

DATE/TIME	MEETING DECRPTION/ LIST OF ATTENDEES	LOCATION
18th March 2024: Bangalore		
11:30 am – 1:00 pm	<p>NLSIU Staff Representatives</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Anjali Varma, People & Culture Officer2. Kalpana Srinivas, Chief Financial Officer3. Joel Xavier, Director, Campus and Residential Life4. Sneha Kumari, Senior Manager, Academic Administration Department5. Shailesh Agarwal, Chief Operating Officer6. Soumya Samal, Communications Office7. Devyani Srivastava, Senior Manager - Research8. Prof. Babu Matthew, Centre for Labour Studies9. Manpreet Dhillon, Academic Fellow10. Harsha N, Co-director, PACE11. Nagraj, Mess Staff12. Prof. Nigam Nuggehalli, Registrar13. Prof. Poonam Saxena, Advisory Panel member (online)14. Nilanjana Singh (on behalf of Ms. Zia Mody, Advisory Panel member) (online)	NLSIU Campus
3:00 – 4:30 pm	<p>NLSIU Faculty</p> <p>Attendees: All NLSIU faculty were invited to attend the consultation. Around 40 faculty members were present at the meeting. Prof. Poonam Saxena, and Nilanjana Singh (on behalf of Ms. Zia Mody, Advisory Panel member) joined online.</p>	NLSIU Campus
5:00 – 6:30 pm	<p>NLSIU Students</p> <p>Attendees: All NLSIU students were invited to attend the consultation. Around 45 students across the BA LLB, LLB (Hons), LLM, and MPP programmes were present. Prof. Poonam Saxena, and Nilanjana Singh (on behalf of Ms. Zia Mody, Advisory Panel member) joined online.</p>	NLSIU Campus

DATE/TIME	MEETING DECRPTION/ LIST OF ATTENDEES	LOCATION
18th March 2024: Bangalore		
8:30 – 10:00 pm	<p>Dinner with Government of Karnataka & NLSIU Executive Council representatives</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Hon'ble Justice S. Sunil Dutt Yadav, Member of the Advisory Panel2. Mr. H.K. Patil Minister of Law and Parliamentary Affairs, Government of Karnataka3. Mr. Shashi Kiran Shetty, Advocate General, Government of Karnataka4. Sri. Srikar M.S, Principal Secretary, Department of Higher Education, Government of Karnataka5. Shri. Vishalaraghu H.L., Chairman, Karnataka State Bar Council6. Prof. (Dr.) Sudhir Krishnaswamy, Vice Chancellor of NLSIU7. Prof. (Dr.) Nigam Nuggehalli, Registrar, NLSIU	Taj West End
19th March 2024: Bangalore		
8:30 – 10:00 am	<p>NLSIU Alumni (Bangalore-based)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Priya Pillai2. C K Nandakumar3. Siddharth Raja4. Anil Bangalore5. Ramanand Mundkur6. Reeba Chacko7. Poornima Hatti8. Ritvik Lukose9. Swasti Raizada10. Arvind Narrain11. Karan Singh12. Arun Thiruvengadam	Taj West End

DATE/TIME	MEETING DESCRIPTION/ LIST OF ATTENDEES	LOCATION
19th March 2024: Bangalore		
11:00 am – 12:30 pm	<p>Chairs of Academic Programmes at NLSIU</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prof. Kamala Sankaran, Dean, Research 2. Prof. Mrinal Satish, LLB Chair 3. Prof. Sneha Thapliyal, MPP Chair 4. Prof. Arul Scaria, LLM Chair 5. Prof. Arun Thiruvengadam, PhD Chair 	NLSIU Campus
12:30 – 2:00 pm	<p>Former Vice Chancellors of NLSIU</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prof. Jayagovind 2. Prof. N. L. Mitra (online) 3. Prof. Mohan Gopal 4. Prof. Venkata Rao 5. Prof. Nigam Nuggehalli, Registrar 	NLSIU Campus
2:00 – 3:00 pm	<p>Student Body Representatives</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Aditi, SBA Co-President 2. Ashish, SBA Co-President 3. Manthan, ex-SBA co-President 4. Vibha, LLB (Hons.) student representative 5. Anakha, LLM student representative 	NLSIU Campus
5:00 – 7:00 pm	<p>Reception at the High Court of Karnataka</p> <p>The High Court of Karnataka hosted a reception for the SRC. The Hon'ble Chief Justice of Karnataka N. V. Anjaria and other distinguished judges of the High Court, including Justice S. Sunil Dutt Yadav (Advisory Panel member) and alumni judges interacted with the Commission. The reception was also attended by representatives of the Advocates Association, Bangalore and NLSIU alumni in the bar.</p>	High Court of Karnataka, Bangalore

DATE/TIME	MEETING DESCRIPTION/ LIST OF ATTENDEES	LOCATION
20th March 2024: Mumbai		
11:00 am – 12:30 pm	<p>Law Firm Leaders</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Zia Mody (Advisory Panel member) 2. Behram Vakil, AZB Partners 3. Nishith Desai, Nishith Desai Associates 4. Ashish Razdan, Khaitan & Co 5. Ashish Ahuja, Wadia Ghandy & Co 6. Sridhar Gorti, Trilegal 7. Suhail Nathani, ELP Law 8. Poornima Sampath, TATA Digital 9. Pramod Rao, Securities and Exchange Board of India 	Taj Mahal Palace
2:30 – 3:30 pm	<p>NLSIU Alumni (Mumbai-based)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mrinal Chandran 2. Neel D'Souza 3. Pramod Rao 4. Rishi Shroff 5. L. Vishwanathan 6. Shuva Mandal 	Taj West End
5:00 – 7:00 pm	<p>Reception at the Bombay High Court</p> <p>The Hon'ble Chief Justice of Bombay High Court Devendra Kumar Upadhyaya and several distinguished judges of the High Court attended a consultation and tea reception with the Commission.</p>	Bombay High Court
8:00 – 9:00 pm	<p>Members of the Litigation Bar</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Akash Rebello 2. Gulnar Mistry 3. Veena Gowda 4. Mrunalini Deshmukh 	Taj Mahal Palace

DATE/TIME	MEETING DESCRIPTION/ LIST OF ATTENDEES	LOCATION
21st March 2024: Delhi		
11:00 am – 12:30 pm	Law Firm Leaders 1. Shardul Shroff 2. Mohit Saraf 3. Harry Chawla 4. Ritu Bhalla 5. Gunjan Shah 6. Gautam Saha 7. Prof. Poonam Saxena, Advisory Panel member (online) 8. Nilanjana Singh (on behalf of Ms. Zia Mody, Advisory Panel member) (online)	Taj Palace
3:00 – 5:00 pm	Legal Academics 1. Prof. M. P. Singh, Professor Emeritus, Delhi University 2. Prof. Ranbir Singh, former Vice-Chancellor of National Law University, Delhi and NALSAR 3. Prof. Alka Chawla, Campus Law Centre 4. Prof. V. K. Ahuja, Vice-Chancellor, NLUJA Assam 5. Prof. Raj C. Kumar, Vice Chancellor, O.P. Jindal Global University 6. Prof. Pritam Baruah, Dean, School of Law, BML Munjal University 7. Dr. Anup Surendranath, NLU-Delhi 8. Prof. Poonam Saxena, Advisory Panel member (online)	Taj Palace
6:30 – 8:00 pm	Dinner with the Hon'ble Chief Justice of India Dr. D. Y. Chandrachud, the Chancellor of NLSIU	
5:00 – 7:00 pm	NLSIU Alumni (Delhi-based) 1. Sumit Baudh 2. Liz Matthew 3. Akila Agrawal 4. Jayant Mehta 5. Samir Gandhi 6. Jatin Aneja 7. Matthew John 8. Vikramjit Banerjee 9. Mani Gupta 10. Gautam Bhatia 11. R Jagannath 12. Beth Joy 13. Saireazh Hazarikha 14. Gunjan Shah	Taj Palace

APPENDIX C

LIST OF ELECTIVE COURSES 2018 - SEPT 2024



APPENDIX D

NOTE ON MULTI-SECTION TEACHING AND PROCESSES FOLLOWED

The National Law School of India University (NLSIU) prior to the Academic Year 2020-21 admitted 80 students per cohort of the B.A., LL.B (Hons.) programme. In accordance with NLSIU's Inclusion and Expansion Plan, starting from Academic Year 2020-21, the size of the B.A., LLB (Hons) cohort was increased from 80 to 120 students. The number of students was maintained at 120 students in Academic Year 2021-22. It increased to 180 students in Academic Year 2022-23, 240 students in Academic Year 2023-24, and to 300 students in Academic Year 2024-25. When the size of the cohort was increased from 80 to 120, students were divided into two sections of 60 each. A multi-section teaching model was put into place. This note describes the manner in which students are allocated to sections, faculty allocation to sections, syllabus development, and evaluation.

ALLOCATION OF STUDENTS TO SECTIONS

At the beginning of each academic year, all students are divided into sections, generally of 60 students each. The allocation of students to sections is done on a random basis, using an auto shuffling function available on Microsoft Excel. This is first done upon admission of students to NLSIU. Subsequently, students are shuffled into sections at the end of every academic year. In the past few years, randomisation has naturally led to a reasonable gender balance in proportion to the overall gender balance of the cohort. If randomisation leads to a skewed gender balance, the University proposes to shuffle students by gender, instead of shuffling the entire cohort. Allocation of Faculty to Sections (Core Courses)

In core courses, faculty members are allocated to teach specific sections of the cohort. In allocating faculty members to sections, the Vice Chancellor and the academic chairs ensure, as far as possible, to provide each section a good mix of faculty members, based on the number of years of teaching experience in the allocated subject. If the same faculty member is allotted to teach a second course in a subject area, or a different course, in the same academic year, they are generally not assigned to teach the section that they already taught in a previous term. Over the three terms, and the entire academic year, the academic team attempts to ensure that each section gets a good mix of faculty members, ranging from those who may be teaching their first course to an experienced faculty member.

PREPARATION OF SYLLABUS

The faculty members allotted to teach a course to multiple sections of the same cohort are designated as a "teaching team" for that course. They are part of a wider "faculty cluster," which consists of faculty members who are qualified (or have interest) in a particular subject matter. The teaching team is required to prepare a common course syllabus that will be taught to the multiple sections of the cohort. The teaching team has the primary responsibility of preparing the course syllabus, in consultation with the faculty cluster. Faculty members have the freedom to employ different pedagogic methods, different approaches, and different ideological frameworks in teaching the prescribed material. They may also choose to teach additional material. However, students will only be examined on the common material taught across all sections of the cohort. Faculty members are also required to agree on a common evaluation framework. Course outlines are reviewed by the Academic Review Committee (ARC), in consultation with the faculty cluster (if required), to ensure compliance with the set norms.

PREPARATION OF QUESTION PAPERS AND EVALUATION

The teaching team is required to prepare question papers for examinations collectively. The question paper should only test students on syllabus covered across all sections. If for instance, one of the faculty members has covered more of the syllabus than the other/s, no questions shall be framed on the additional topic/s, case/s. As per the Academic and Examination Regulations of NLSIU, each course has an examination component of 60 marks. Depending on the number of sections that the cohort is divided into, each faculty member is required to set questions for the appropriate value of marks. For instance, if the cohort is divided into 3 sections, each faculty member is required to set questions for 20 marks each. In setting questions, the teaching team is required to ensure a spread of topics. The ARC reviews question papers to ensure compliance with these norms.

All students are required to attempt this common question paper. Faculty members evaluate the entire cohort's responses to the questions that they have set.

The rationale behind having a common question paper is to ensure faculty accountability, and that the syllabus agreed upon by the teaching team is effectively taught. The course should be taught in a manner that a student should be able to answer questions set by, and evaluated by a member of the teaching team, who has not taught the section that the student is assigned to. Steps to prevent inter-section marking disparity in continuing evaluation component NLSIU's Academic and Examination Regulations provide that 40 of the 100 marks allocated to each course will consist of continuing evaluation components. This may be a term paper, an essay, response papers, moot court exercises etc. In order to ensure that there is no inter-section disparity in marking this component, faculty members are encouraged to agree on marking criteria, marking bands, and consistent scoring patterns in advance of evaluating these components. When the marks are submitted by faculty members to the academic administration department, the concerned programme chairs review the marks submitted to ensure that the scores are not disparate. Scores are considered disparate if the difference in average marks between the sections is more than 1 mark. The distribution of marks and the median across sections are also compared to ensure that the marks are not widely disparate. In such a case, the teaching team is requested to moderate their scores, in order to arrive at this scale.

APPENDIX E

NLSIU PRINCIPLES OF CONDUCT, 2002



NLSIU PRINCIPLES OF CONDUCT, 2002 (V.2)

Effective Date: 1st October, 2022

Version History: v.2

Approved by the Executive Council on: 17.09.2022

NATIONAL LAW SCHOOL OF INDIA UNIVERSITY

PRINCIPLES OF CONDUCT, 2002

1. OBJECTIVES

- 1.1. The National Law School of India University Act, 1986, mandates the University, inter alia, to "develop in the student and the research scholar a sense of responsibility to serve society in the field of law" (Section 4(1)). Thus, a main object of the University is to inculcate in students and research scholars such values and principles as are conducive to the development of a sense of responsibility in them to serve society in the field of law. Such a sense of social responsibility cannot be externally imposed; it emanates from the inner sense of ethical and moral values of each individual.
- 1.2. Another core purpose for which the University exists is to "advance and disseminate learning and knowledge" To fulfil this core mandate, each member of the University community will need to uphold and promote those values that are essential for learning and the advancement of knowledge such as self-discipline, intellectual humility and the capacity to listen, uncompromising commitment to truth, a peaceful and harmonious environment that safeguards the human dignity and self-respect of each student and scholar and promotes calm and quiet reflection and fraternal courtesy and cooperation.
- 1.3. The University's anthem, Tagore's *Gitanjali*, sets out in powerful terms the values to which the University is Committed and reaffirms value-based education and research as the core purpose of the University. It is set out here so that we may once remind ourselves of the values that are celebrated in the poem:

Where the *mind is without fear* and the *head is held high*;
Where *knowledge is free*;
Where the world has *not been broken up into fragments* by narrow domestic walls;
Where words come out from the depth of *truth*;
Where *tireless striving* stretches its arms towards *perfectionism*;
Where the clear stream of *reason* has not lost its way into the dreary sand of dead habit;
Where the mind is led forward by thee into *ever widening thought and action*;
Into that heaven of *freedom*, my Father, let my country awake.



- 1.4. The Constitution of India contains the core values to which we are committed as a nation -- justice, liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith and \Worship; equality of status and of opportunity; fraternity assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity and integrity of the nation.
- 1.5. The NLSIU Act places on the Vice-Chancellor the responsibility and authority to maintain discipline among the students.
- 1.6. These principles of conduct and related procedures are intended to best achieve the above purposes and mandate of the University with respect to the education of its students, including the proper maintenance of discipline among students. *There can be no single view on what personal values and behaviours are conducive to the achievement of these goals. Nor can values be imposed.* Each of us has the responsibility to reflect in our own minds on the mandate of the University and its pledge of value-based education and define for ourselves those personal values and behaviours that we each believe will assist in the realization of these goals. Equally, it is the responsibility of the University to identify and commend those core values and behaviours which the University considers as the minimum necessary for the achievement of these goals. These values are not static. They will need to be continually discussed and debated within the community and must evolve over time. The minimum commended core values of the University include the following:
- (i) **TRUTHFULNESS** in word and deed.
 - (ii) **NON-VIOLENCE** towards all -- sentient beings and inanimate nature;
 - (iii) **COMPASSION** towards all;
 - (iv) **RESPECT FOR THE INHERENT EQUAL HUMAN DIGNITY AND EQUAL STATUS OF ALL PEOPLE** irrespective of status or position; abjuring of prejudice or discrimination against anyone including on the basis of gender, caste, religion or region; respectful and courteous behaviour towards all.
 - (v) **FREEDOM**: Respecting the freedom of all, including their freedom of thought, belief and their freedom to dissent; and exercising such freedom with responsibility not to harm others or impinge on their freedom.
 - (vi) **PLURALISM AND PLURI-VERSALISM**; respect for and tolerance towards beliefs, ideas and views of others; willingness to listen to and respect ideas opposed to one's own; upholding the right and freedom of each person to pursue, discover and cherish the truth as he or she sees it.
 - (vii) **PROFESSIONALISM**: upholding the highest standards of professionalism, analytical rigor and sound reasoning; striving towards the highest quality in all work.
 - (viii) **SAFEGUARDING THE INTERESTS OF THE COMMUNITY AND AVOIDING HARM TO THE COMMUNITY** including—



- (a) Avoidance of any injury or violence; physical or verbal -- to any other member of the community;
- (b) safeguarding and enhancing the safety and well-being of oneself and of others; avoidance of behaviour which places any other person at risk -- actual or potential.
- (c) avoidance of unhealthy and harmful competition with other members of the University community; promotion of the mutual fraternity and unity of the community and avoidance of groupism at all levels;
- (d) Sensitivity towards the opinions, beliefs, moral values and sensibilities of other members of the community and avoidance of public behaviour that causes undue disturbance or offence to other members 'of the community.

These values affirm our human dignity, promote the interests of the individual and the common purposes that bring us together in the University. They represent the way each of us would v/ant to be treated and would like others to behave towards us. They lie at the core of the causes to which law is dedicated -- justice, equality, freedom, social responsibility, respect for persons and property, freedom and due process. In essence~, they call for behaviour that avoids harm to members of the~ University community and promotes the purposes of the University community.

- 1.7. It is also necessary for the University to explicitly identify the types of misconduct which are inconsistent with its mandate and mission and the above values and the processes by which issues of misconduct would be dealt with.
- 1.8. These Principles and Procedures shall be read in consonance with the University's Rules and Regulations and their subsequent amendments, including but not limited to the applicable Academic and Examination Regulations, NLSIU Residence Life Policy, 2021; NLSIU Information Technology Policies, 2020 and NLSIU Code to Combat Sexual Harassment, 2019.
- Provided, all complaints covered by the University's Code to Combat Sexual Harassment shall be covered exclusively dealt with under that Code and not by these Principles and Procedures. Further provided, all complaints covered by NLSIU's Residence Life Policy shall be exclusively dealt with under that Policy and rules pursuant, and not by these Principles and Procedures.
- In case of any doubt regarding whether a matter is covered by these Principles and Procedures or any other rule in force, the Registrar shall make a final decision on the applicable framework.
- 1.9. These Principles and Procedures apply to all students of NLSIU.



2. DEFINITIONS

In these Procedures, unless the context otherwise requires:

- (a) **"Vice-Chancellor"** means, the Vice-Chancellor of National Law School of India University;
- (b) **"Registrar"** means, the Registrar of National Law School of India University;
- (c) **"Corrective Action"** includes any action taken under these procedures for any misconduct under the University's disciplinary powers;
- (d) **"Student"** means a student duly enrolled and either attending classes and/or pursuing studies in any program or course of the National Law School of India University (including full-time programmes; doctoral programmes and online or hybrid learning programmes); and
- (e) **"DARIC"** means the University's Disciplinary Matters Advisory, Review and Investigation Committee appointed by the Vice-Chancellor for the purposes specified by him, and shall have such membership as the Vice-Chancellor shall determine from time to time.

3. MISCONDUCT

Misconduct consists of:

- 3.1. Conduct that causes serious physical or emotional harm to any person, whether or not a member of the University community, or could reasonably be considered as likely to cause such harm, including violent behaviour of any kind such as assault, fighting, injuring others, manhandling and other such debasing forms of behaviour; outraging or attempting to outrage the modesty of any person; possession of weapons, explosives or any other similar materials that are inimical to the safety of any member of the University community; verbal or written threats or abuse with the intention of causing harassment to any member of the University community; threatening the lives or peace of others on the campus or its precincts.
- 3.2. Conduct that seriously and materially harms the University, its goals, its work, its ethical standards or its learning environment including (a) wilful disobedience of instructions of the University (including from teachers, officers of the University, Warden or any other person associated with teaching or administrative work of the University); disrupting peace and order in the University including riotous or disorderly behaviour; wilfully damaging University property; wilfully causing loss to the University; maliciously bringing down or maligning the status or reputation of the University; and (b) dishonesty including lying, theft or fraud; misrepresentation, including obtaining any degree, diploma, honour, prize, award or recognition by fraud or misrepresentation.
- 3.3. Conduct hazardous to human health, safety or wellbeing including consumption or possession



of alcohol in the University premises, consumption of drugs, narcotics/psychotropic or similar substances; entering the University premises after consuming and while under the influence of alcohol, drugs, narcotics/psychotropic or similar substances; bringing, or being party to any effort or scheme to bring, alcohol or any of the aforementioned substances into the University campus; supplying drugs or narcotics/psychotropic substances including to a member of the University community regardless of where the supply occurs; being under the influence of alcohol or any of the aforementioned substances within the University precincts; smoking in University premises outside any areas designated by the University as smoking areas.

- 3.4. Disruption or disturbance of University work or activities including causing a disturbance in any class, University event, the academic block or the library; disobeying the instructions of a teacher or staff member in-charge; engaging in any activity inconsistent with the learning objectives of the class or University event; behaving in a class or any other University 'event or function' in a manner that is inconsistent with the behaviour and conduct reasonably expected on the occasion.
- 3.5. Lack of respect and courtesy towards the community and individual members of the community including discourteous or disrespectful behaviour towards teachers, administrative staff and/or guests of /visitors to the University; verbal abuse and use of obscene language or language known to be offensive to others (such as gender/caste/regional/linguistic epithets); being inappropriately dressed or attired in public/community areas; indecent public behaviour.
- 3.6. Failure to observe University Regulations, rules and instructions issued to students from time-to-time.
- 3.7. Abetment of Misconduct: any behaviour likely to encourage or cause other students to engage in misconduct.

4. PROCEDURES

4.1. Initiation of Proceedings

- (a) Where any faculty member, staff or student of the University is of the view that a student may have engaged in misconduct, they may submit a written complaint to the Registrar requesting that the matter be investigated by the DARIC.
- (b) Where the Registrar is of the view that a student may have engaged in misconduct, they may instruct DARIC in writing to inquire into the matter and determine whether or not such violation has occurred. Where the Registrar is of the view that no allegation of misconduct is



made out, they may dismiss the complaint, recording the decision with reasons.

4.2. *Preliminary Inquiry*

- (a) Upon receiving the Registrar's instruction or approval for instituting an inquiry, DARIC shall carry out a preliminary inquiry of the matter and determine whether a *prima facie* case exists.
- (b) If the DARIC so determines that a *prima facie* case exists, it shall further determine:
 - i. Who shall be parties to the inquiry;
 - ii. Where there are two or more students involved in the alleged misconduct, whether a joint inquiry shall be conducted against all the students; and
 - iii. Whether it is necessary to impose any interim measure on the student/s involved, including placing a suspension pending inquiry if it is satisfied that such measure is necessary to (a) to ensure that a fair inquiry is conducted into the allegations under these Principles and Procedures without direct or indirect interference in the process by, or on behalf of, such student; (b) for the safety and wellbeing of any student(s) and/or the students against whom the allegations are made; or (c) in the best interests of the University, for reasons to be set out in writing.
- (c) Where the DARIC has determined that a *prima facie* case exists under Section 4.2.(a) and completed its review under Section 4.2.(b) above, it shall issue notice to the students involved, and additionally provide a copy of the Preliminary Inquiry Report to the parties.
- (d) Where the DARIC has determined there is no *prima facie* case, it shall submit its Preliminary Inquiry Report recording its decision with reasons to the Registrar and the Complainant.

4.3. *Inquiry Proceedings*

- (a) The DARIC shall initiate its inquiry upon serving notice to the parties involved, as referred to in Section 4.2. (c). The Notice shall include:
 - i. a summary description of the complaint;
 - ii. the alleged misconduct the student is charged with under the NLSIU Principles of Conduct, 2002 and identification of the Core University Values alleged to have been violated;
 - iii. whether the student/s have offered an admission of the charge;
 - iv. the time within which the student/s shall be required to submit their written statement of defence; and
 - v. a list of documents and witnesses, on the basis of which the alleged act of misconduct is proposed to be sustained.
- (b) On receipt of the written statements of defence, DARIC may inquire into such charges which are not admitted, or where all the charges have been admitted by the student in their written



statement of defence, the Committee shall record its findings on each charge after taking such evidence as it may think fit. If no written statement of defence is submitted by the student, DARIC may inquire into the charges *ex parte*.

- (c) The DARIC shall determine whether it is necessary to conduct an oral hearing and if so, shall inform the parties of the date and time of such hearing. Provided, if a party requests to be heard orally, the DARIC shall consider the request and communicate its decision on whether to conduct an oral hearing, which shall be treated as final.
- (d) In the event of an oral hearing, the Committee shall orally examine the parties and their witnesses. Cross-examination shall not be direct, and be conducted by way of submitting questions of the opposite party or their witnesses in writing to the DARIC. The DARIC shall ask only those questions it deems fit.
- (e) In all cases, DARIC shall ensure that the procedure followed shall comply with the principles of natural justice are followed before a final view is taken by DARIC with respect to their conduct.
- (f) On completion of the inquiry if DARIC concludes that any student may have engaged in misconduct, DARIC shall recommend to the Registrar an appropriate Corrective Action with respect to the misconduct. Such Corrective Action shall be based on the suggested Corrective Actions set out in Section 5 below.
- (g) Promptly after the conclusion of the inquiry, a report shall be prepared by DARIC and submitted to the Registrar which shall contain:
 - i. the charges and the statement of imputations of misconduct;
 - ii. the defence or admission of the student in respect of each charge;
 - iii. an assessment of the evidence in respect of each charge;
 - iv. the findings on each charge and the reasons therefor; and
 - v. if DARIC finds that one or more of the parties has engaged in misconduct, a recommendation on the corrective action with respect to each such party.
- (h) The DARIC shall prepare the record of inquiry to be submitted to the Registrar, which shall include:
 - i. the written statement of defence, if any, submitted by the student;
 - ii. the oral and documentary evidence produced in the course of the inquiry;
 - iii. written briefs, if any, filed by the student who is the subject of inquiry, during the course of the inquiry; and
 - iv. the orders, if any, made by DARIC in regard to the inquiry.



4.4. Action on the Inquiry

- (a) The Registrar shall review the recommendation submitted by DARIC pursuant to Section 4.3. above and shall implement the recommendation unless the Registrar finds that the inquiry carried out by DARIC or the recommendations for Corrective Action are vitiated by any gross irregularity or illegality or mala fides.
- (b) Where the Registrar decides to reject the findings and recommendations of DARIC pursuant to Section 4.4.(a) above, the Registrar shall return the entire proceedings to DARIC for reconsideration or further inquiry on any aspect.
- (c) On receipt of a communication from the Registrar under Section 4.4.(b) above, DARIC shall consider the issues identified by the Registrar and reconsider its prior decision in response to the issues raised by the Registrar and, if DARIC feels necessary, make further inquiry into the matter. Upon completion of its consideration, DARIC shall submit its conclusions and recommendations to the Registrar.
- (d) If the Registrar is satisfied that the findings and recommendations of DARIC as resubmitted under Section 4.4.(c) above satisfactorily address the concerns raised by the Registrar, they shall implement the recommendations.
- (e) If the Registrar is still of the view that the findings and recommendations resubmitted by DARIC under Section 4.4.(d) above suffer from any gross irregularity or illegality or mala fides or are not in the best interests of the University, the Registrar shall reconstitute the Committee to conduct a fresh inquiry into the matter.
- (f) Final orders made by the Registrar under this Sub-Section shall be communicated in writing to the concerned parties who shall also be supplied with a copy of the report of the Inquiry, the findings and the proposed Corrective Action. Copies of depositions of witnesses shall be made available for perusal to a party concerned with such deposition.

4.5. Review

- (a) A person with respect to whom Corrective Action is to be taken pursuant to Section 4.4. above may, within fifteen working days of receiving a communication of such Corrective Action, or a person who feels aggrieved by any decision of DARIC or the Registrar under these Procedures, request the Vice-Chancellor to review such action or decision on the ground that such Corrective Action and the Inquiry on which it is based is vitiated by gross irregularity or illegality. The reasons for requesting the review shall be clearly and fully set out in the request



along with all supporting documentation.

- (b) The Vice-Chancellor may entertain a request for review after the expiry of the fifteen day period if they are satisfied that the concerned requestor had sufficient cause, beyond his/her control, for not submitting the appeal in time.
- (c) Upon receipt of the written request of the person seeking a review, the Vice-Chancellor may provide an opportunity to such person for oral representations to be made to elaborate and explain the written submission without raising new grounds.
- (d) After due consideration of the request for review and any oral representation, the Vice-Chancellor shall, without disturbing any finding of fact, either (a) confirm the actions taken by the Registrar under Section 4.4. above; or (b) set aside the action taken by the Registrar under Section 4.4. on the ground that it suffers from gross irregularity or illegality or is not in the best interests of the University.
- (e) In all cases, the Vice-Chancellor shall not interfere with findings of fact and shall set down the reasons for his final decision under Section 4.5.(d) above in writing, which shall be made available to the Registrar, DARIC, the person requesting the review and any other person affected by the review process as determined by the Vice-Chancellor.
- (f) The Vice-Chancellor's decision on the review shall be final. Where the Vice-Chancellor so deems necessary, the Vice-Chancellor may delay the implementation of the decision of the Registrar pending completion of the review described in this Sub-Section for such period as the Vice-Chancellor deems fit.

4.6. General provisions

- (a) The proceedings established here are intended to assist the University to decide on appropriate actions most likely to result in the long-term positive development of the personality, character, values and potential of students; and preserve and enhance the overall learning environment of the University. They are to be distinguished in this respect from court proceedings and other administrative proceedings intended merely to punish.
- (b) In determining the appropriate Corrective Action most likely to result in the long-term positive development of the student, the Committee shall take into account the nature and severity of the misconduct and the past record of the student.
- (c) All persons involved in these proceedings shall do so in their individual capacity. Representation is not allowed. Where any person feels that they require assistance to participate in these proceedings, a request to this effect may be made to DARIC which shall



consider the request and take necessary action.

- (d) Given that these proceedings involve young people and recognizing the need for the protection of their reputation, the proceedings under these Procedures shall be treated as strictly confidential and shall not be divulged by any faculty or staff member or any of the parties to anyone not involved in the inquiry process.
- (e) Where the corrective action proposed involves permanent rustication or permanent debarment from appearing for an examination, such corrective action shall be considered and imposed by the Executive Council of the University under paragraph 32 (2) of the schedule of the NLSIU Act. In all other cases, the corrective action shall be imposed by or under the authority of the Vice-Chancellor as provided in these Principles and Procedures.

5. CORRECTIVE ACTIONS

The corrective action that may be recommended by the DARIC includes, but is not limited to:

- (a) Censure/ admonition / reprimand;
- (b) Fine;
- (c) Public apology;
- (d) Disqualification from appearing for examinations; cancelling retrospectively the results of the examinations taken by the student and requiring the student to retake such examinations which shall be marked as repeat (R);
- (e) Disqualification from representing the University in any activity for a specified period;
- (f) Termination of and debarment from holding any post / office either elected or otherwise in an activity-based committee, hostel committees or other student or other University committees or bodies for a specified period.
- (g) Suspension from classes and access to the University premises for a specified period; and
- (h) Permanent rustication.

NOTE: -

- (1) The University reserves the right to inform the parent or guardian of a student against whom disciplinary proceedings are initiated.
- (2) Where a student has found to have committed misconduct under these procedures on more than three occasions, the University shall indicate in the Character Certificate of the student that the character of the student is unsatisfactory.

APPENDIX F

GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE OF NLSIU

NLSIU was established by the National Law School of India Act, 1986. Section 8 of the Act lists the following as the 'authorities' or governing bodies of the University: the General Council, Executive Council, the Academic Council, and the Finance Committee. The composition of these bodies includes members from these key constituencies: the Judiciary, the Bar Council of India, the Karnataka Government, and NLSIU faculty.

Conventionally, the Chief Justice of India has been the Chancellor of the University (see Section 7(1) of the Act) and the Chairman of the BCI is the Chairman of the General Council (as per Clause 3(1) of the Schedule).

Amendments to Governing Structure:

In 1993, on the recommendation of the University Grants Commission, the NLSI Act was amended to modify the description and powers of the General Council from being the supreme authority of the University to its chief advisory body. In 2004, the Act was amended to change the nomenclature of the post of 'Director' and 'Visitor' to 'Vice-Chancellor' and 'Chancellor' respectively to be on par with other Universities.

General Council
Chair: BCI Chairman

Number of members: 37 (plus members mentioned at Point No. 5)

Composition:

- 1. BCI Chairman
- 2. Vice-Chancellor
- 3. Chief Justice of the Karnataka High Court
- 4. Programme Chairs of B.A.LL.B, LL.B (Hons.), LLM, MPP, and PhD: 5 members
- 5. Members of the Executive Council who are not already members of the General Council

And the following nominees:

NOMINATING BODY	NOMINEES	NUMBER OF NOMINEES
BCI	Three members of BCI	3
Bar Council of India Trust	(i) Managing trustee of BCI Trust (ii) Any other trustee of BCI Trust	2
Bar Council of India Trust in consultation with the Chancellor	Two persons from the distinguished men of letters, educationists of repute, members of the learned professions or eminent public men.	2
NLSIU Society	Any person	1
GoK	Two persons from the members of the General Council	2
Vice Chancellor	Three teachers of whom one shall be among the professors, one from among the associate professors and one from among the assistant professors (nominated by rotation according to seniority in each category)	3
Total number of nominated members		13

Term of members:

3 years (except in cases specified under sub-clauses (1) and (2) of Clause 8 of the Schedule)

Powers:

The Executive Council is constituted under Section 10 of the Act read with Clause 7 of the Schedule. It is the highest administrative body of the University which is vested with the control of the University's administration, management, and income. It is empowered to control and administer the property and funds of the University. It appoints officers of the University (such as the Vice Chancellor and Registrar), takes policy decisions and regulates the University's functions. It is empowered to create administrative, ministerial and other necessary posts, and to determine the number and emoluments of such posts. It manages and regulates the finances, accounts, investments, property, business and all other administrative affairs of the University.

Under Clause 18 of the Schedule, the Vice-Chancellor appointed by the Executive Council shall exercise all powers of the Executive Council in the management and administration of the University subject to the specific and general directions of the Executive Council. It may be noted that while the term of membership of the governing bodies is three years, the term of the position of Vice-Chancellor is for five years. All members of the Executive Council are also members of the General Council under Clause 2(m) of the Schedule.

Academic Council

Chair: Vice-Chancellor

Number of members: 14 (plus variable number of Professors)

Composition:

1. Vice-Chancellor
2. Programme Chairs of B.A.LL.B, LL.B (Hons.), LLM, MPP, and PhD: 5 members
3. All Professors at NLSIU
4. One member of teaching staff representing Associate Professors (nominated by rotation according to seniority)
5. One member of teaching staff representing Assistant Professors (nominated by rotation according to seniority)

And the following nominees:

NOMINATING BODY	NOMINEES	NUMBER OF NOMINEES
BCI in consultation with the Chancellor	Three persons from amongst the educationists of repute or men of letters or members of the learned professions or eminent public men, who are not in the service of the School.	3
BCI	Any person	1
Bar Council of India Trust	Any person	1
GoK	Any person	1
Total number of nominated members		6

Term of membership: 3 years

Powers:
The Academic Council is constituted under Section 11 of the Act read with Clause 13 of the Schedule. It regulates and is responsible for the standards of instruction, education, and examination at the University and is empowered to advise the Executive Council on all academic matters. It reviews and approves the academic and co-curricular programmes and the evaluation/examination regulations and standards. It is empowered inter alia to make recommendations to the Executive Council with regard to the creation, abolition or classification of teaching posts in the School. The Academic Council shall have the power to propose regulations on all the matters specified in sub-clause (a) to (h) of Section 13(1).

Finance Committee
Chair: Treasurer (i.e., Managing Trustee of the Bar Council of India Trust)
Number of members: 5
Composition:
1. Managing Trustee of the Bar Council of India Trust (who is the Treasurer of the University as per Clause 3(3) of the Schedule)
2. Vice Chancellor

And the following nominees:

NOMINATING BODY	NOMINEES	NUMBER OF NOMINEES
Executive Council	Three members of the Executive Council out of which: (i) one member should be from the BCI (ii) one member should be from GoK	3

Term of membership: 3 years

Powers:
The Finance Committee is constituted by the terms of Clause 16 of the Schedule. The Committee is empowered to examine and scrutinize the annual budget of the school and make recommendations on financial matters to the Executive Council. It may consider proposals for new expenditure, and the periodical statement of accounts and review the finances of the school.

Recommendations of Previous Commissions on Governance 1996 Expert Panel

The Report of the Expert Panel in 1996 considered governance and made certain recommendations. The Panel noted that the governance structure of the University would likely have to evolve as the institution grows in order to accommodate the challenges of expansion.

The Panel made the following observations and recommendations:

- a) The Panel noted that the Faculty as a body is not given institutional recognition in the NLSI Act. It was suggested that the membership of the Executive Council be expanded and that formal recognition be given to the Faculty as an important decision making unit in the institutional structure.
- b) The Panel noted that ensuring some representation for distinguished and recent alumni of the University in the Executive and Academic Councils should be seriously considered. The important role of financial contributions from alumni, as well as the value of their insights on policy formulation and planning was noted.
- c) It was recommended that as the University enters a new phase of development, it may be necessary for the Finance Committee to meet more regularly than the minimum of two annual meetings mandated by the Act. It was suggested that the decisions and reports of the Finance Committee should also be made available regularly to the members of the Academic Council and/or the Faculty.
- d) It was suggested that a system of student and alumni participation and consultation in the activities of the school, such as curriculum reviews, be considered.

2007 Commission

The School Review Commission constituted in 2007 also considered the issue of governance and made specific recommendations on amending the governing structure. Some of the important amendments recommended by the SRC are highlighted below:

- a) The SRC noted that the University was now in a position to generate its own resources and was not dependent anymore on the Bar Council of India Trust ('BCI Trust'; a public and charitable trust) created by the BCI. Thus, the SRC observed that the nomination of members by the BCI Trust to the Executive Council has become redundant and requires amendment. Instead of nominees from the Trust, the SRC suggested that members from the Bar and Bench, a former Vice-Chancellor of NLSIU, and a retired judge of the High Court be nominated to the Executive Council. The nominee of the Trust in the Academic Council was also suggested to be replaced with a Professor of Law from another reputed university.
- b) The SRC also observed that the purpose of involving the National Law School of India Society in the governing structure has become redundant. In place of providing for a nominee of the Society on the Executive Council, it was suggested that an alumnus be nominated by the Chancellor in consultation with the Vice-Chancellor.
- c) Instead of three nominees from the BCI, the SRC recommended only one nominee of the BCI and two additional academics (nominated by the Chancellor in consultation with the Vice-Chancellor) be appointed to the Executive Council. It was felt that for the University's growth and development, more academic inputs from members of academia would be advantageous.
- d) The SRC recommended that a sub-committee of 3-5 members of the Executive Council be constituted to closely assist the Vice-Chancellor and the University in decision-making on all crucial matters in anticipation of formal approval of the Executive Council.

- e) The SRC observed that the provision which empowers the Executive Council to appoint the Vice-Chancellor is inconsistent with the provision which makes the Vice-Chancellor the Chairman of the Executive Council, as it implies that the controlling authority vested in the Vice-Chancellor is also the appointing authority of the Vice-Chancellor. Thus it suggested changing the mode of appointment of the Vice-Chancellor under Clause 18 of the Schedule.
- f) The SRC recommended that Clause 24 of the Schedule which deals with the auditing of annual accounts needs to be strengthened.
- g) The SRC recommended that the Registrar should solely devote themselves to the discharge of administrative functions rather than also being a faculty member discharging academic functions.

