

**SAM PITRODA  
CHAIRMAN**

Dated 17 April 2008

Dear Mr. Prime Minister,

The recent measures introduced by your government leading to a major expansion of the higher education sector are probably among the most important steps in making India globally competitive in the long run. Expansion and inclusiveness, drawing larger sections of Indians into the arena of knowledge creation and utilization will be the key drivers to a better future.

The National Knowledge Commission would like to draw your attention to the central role of governance structures in allowing these new institutions to grow rapidly, efficiently and productively and also, to review procedures in some of our best existing institutions like IITs, IIMs, Central Universities and AIIMS.

It is imperative to separate governance mechanisms from the day to day operations of Ministries, in order to protect functional autonomy, in its fullest sense. We would like to suggest some ideas for your consideration.

1. The appointment of Directors /Vice Chancellors of the new IITs , IIMs, IISERs, Central Universities, AIIMS must be made by a Search Committee that has an independent Chair, capable of exercising the highest quality of judgment .The direct involvement of Administrative Ministries can result in unfortunate situations.
2. The Procedure for appointment of the Chairperson and members of governing Councils/Boards needs to be carefully crafted in order to ensure that institutions have the benefit of the widest inputs from academia and society.
3. The involvement of the Chair of the Governing Board and at least two independent members in the selection of the Director /Vice-Chancellor will ensure smooth functioning at later stages of an institution's development.
4. Appointments of heads of institutions must be made well in advance of a vacancy arising, so that a smooth transition is effected. In view of fixed tenures, there is no reason that this cannot be done in all institutions.
5. The proposal for an independent regulatory body for higher education was also advanced by the Commission as an expression of its concern at the deteriorating ambience of institutions of learning in many parts of the country.

In summary, we believe, that Governance issues may be central to any debate on improving the status of higher education in India.

With warm regards

Yours sincerely

SAM PITRODA

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Prime Minister of India  
South Block  
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