



Message to Ashoka Community

1 message

VC Office <vcs@ashoka.edu.in>
To: VC Office <vcs@ashoka.edu.in>

Mon 27 Aug, 2018 at 3:34 PM

Dear Ashoka Community,

I just wanted to give a brief follow up on the sexual harassment case regarding Dr. Mitul Baruah.

The case was originally referred to Ashoka by Jawaharlal Nehru University. Over the course of the last year, the university conducted extensive inquiries into the matter. There were some circumstances specific to this case that necessitated protracted inquiries. Throughout this process, Ashoka University was fully committed to seeking truth and justice. Consequently, the case was examined by CASH. The CASH committee returned a finding that found Prof. Baruah not guilty of sexual harassment. This finding was consistent with the finding of the JNU Committee as well, which had also found him not guilty of sexual harassment. However, since the CASH Committee raised some possible concerns about Prof. Baruah's conduct not relating to sexual harassment, Ashoka Board of Management appointed another committee to look into matters pertaining to this case, to ensure that no facet was left unexamined. This Committee also concurred with the original finding that there was no case for sexual harassment. Its findings were referred to the Board of Management, which, as per Ashoka Faculty Disciplinary guidelines, referred the findings to a Judicial Committee. All throughout, the proceedings were conducted with an absolute commitment to fairness. I would wish to emphasize the following points:

1. All Committees that have looked into the matter found Prof. Baruah, NOT GUILTY, of sexual harassment. This includes in total three Ashoka Committees, and the JNU Committee as well. In short, four committees have found him not guilty of the charge of sexual harassment. This is the verdict of all the committees, and we should respect that verdict.
2. A wide range of faculty and other representatives were involved in these committees. They conducted the proceedings with integrity and commitment to truth. The fact that a number of different committees and faculty members agreed on the core findings should give us confidence that they were guided by no consideration other than the evidence at hand.
3. Any other infractions, not relating to sexual harassment, were dealt with as per Ashoka University Norms.

Ashoka University is fully committed to ensuring a campus that is free of sexual harassment. The commitment and fairness shown by so many of our colleagues during this process should give us confidence that Ashoka's processes meet the highest benchmarks of integrity. Respecting the confidentiality of the process requires that we not conduct public trials based on speculation or second-guessing evidence. Confidentiality requires that the university not engage in a public argument over the facts of the case. Any breach of confidentiality may only disempower future victims from coming forward. These committees have looked at the totality of the evidence, in its proper context, before delivering their findings. A commitment to fairness requires that we respect that outcome.

I thank you for your patience, and for your understanding.

Regards,

Vice Chancellor

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