

Professor Furqan Qamar Assumes the Role of Secretary General, AIU

Professor Furqan Qamar, an internationally renowned and nationally respected Educationist has assumed his new role of the Secretary General, Association of Indian Universities on 26th June, 2014 for a term of five years. He was chosen from amongst several Vice Chancellors for this position of the Principal Executive Officer of the Association while he was serving the Central University of Himachal Pradesh as its Vice Chancellor. In his illustrious academic career spanning over three decades, Prof Qamar held the positions of Professor and Founder Director of the Centre for Management Studies at Jamia Millia Islamia, a Central University in Delhi; Advisor (Education) in the Planning Commission of India; Vice Chancellor of the University of Rajasthan at Jaipur; and the first and Founder Vice Chancellor of the Central University of Himachal Pradesh at Dharamshala. His contributions in each of these assignments have been remarkable.

As a Professor at Jamia Millia Islamia he was instrumental in introducing BBS and MBA programme and eventually succeeded in establishing and nurturing the premier Centre for Management Studies in the University. Besides, he played instrumental role in the overall development of the University in various capacities viz In-charge/OSD of Development, Member Secretary of the Committee to conduct Academic & Administrative Audit of the University, NSS Programme Officer, Warden, and Provost of Halls of Residence. As Coordinator of International Affairs, he was instrumental in entering into agreements and MoUs with large number of international universities.

As Advisor in Planning Commission, Dr. Qamar played a critical and proactive role in conceptualising ideas leading to policies for expansion, inclusion and excellence in higher education during the 11th Five Year Plan. Besides, he endeared himself for his remarkable ability of winning the confidence, trust and support of all stakeholders in steering and implementing the planned programmes and agenda throughout the Country.

As Vice Chancellor of the University of Rajasthan, he is remembered for his humane and participatory approach through openness, transparency, positivity, democratic decision-making processes thereby enabling the university to make exceptional accomplishments culminating into wide

ranging academic and administrative reforms aimed at promoting excellence in PhD Postgraduate and undergraduate programmes.

During his tenure as the first and the Founder Vice Chancellor, the Central University of Himachal Pradesh, despite travails of identifying and getting land for its permanent campuses, came to be recognised the most innovative university with distinctive academic architecture, innovative curricular framework, multi-disciplinary modular programmes of studies based on comprehensive choice based credit system and performance oriented transparent systems and processes. During a short span of a little less than five years, the University had made functional eleven Schools with seventeen Departments offering quality higher education through regular full time faculty to nearly a thousand postgraduate students, research scholars and the University could hold two annual convocations with Dalai Lama and the then President of India as the Chief Guests respectively.

Dr. Qamar has obviously left distinctive and indelible footprint to whatever position he has so far held and has earned accolades from eminent academicians and higher education policy planners for his academic eminence, creative thinking, leadership qualities, administrative acumen and above all his unique and humane approach based on humility, sincerity and democratic dialogue. He was recognised with the Illustrious Alumnus Award by the University of Lucknow (2008), Rajrishi Puroshattam Das Tandon Award for academic excellence (2010) and numerous others for his contribution in institution building and academic leadership. An excellent orator known for his innovative ideas and commitment for the cause of higher education, He has been regularly invited to deliver special Lectures, Memorial Lecturers and Convocation addresses by higher educational institutions of repute and also at the Higher Education Summits regularly organised by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and industry (*FICCI*) and other industry associations, media groups and other governmental and non-governmental organisations.

Dr Qamar has had a distinguished academic career. Born in 1960 in the village Bahariabad of the District Ghazipur (UP), Dr. Qamar had his early education in the village primary school and the rest of his schooling and higher education in public funded schools, college and University at Lucknow. He obtained his Ph.D. (1989) from the University of Lucknow

on 'Financial Management in Universities in India' after completing Masters Degree (1981) from the University of Lucknow in first Division and first Position. He obtained his Bachelors degree (1979) from the Lucknow Christian Degree College of the University of Lucknow in first Division and first position in the college and fourth position in the University. He passed his High School (1975) and Intermediate (1977) Examinations of UP Board in First Division and was a school topper.

He began his academic career as a Teaching Assistant in the Lucknow Christian Degree College (1981-1982) and later served as Junior/Research Fellow (1982-84) at the University of Lucknow. Soon he moved to Jamia Millia Islamia in 1984 as Lecturer in Commerce in the Department of Economics in the Faculty of Social Science, where he rose to the position of Professor & Founder Director of the Centre for Management Studies. Besides, he held the position of Professor in the Abu Dhabi Campus of the Southeastern University and also at Al Bayan University during 1995-98 and has delivered lectures at National College of Science & Technology (now Al Dhoffar University) at Salala in Oman and also at the University of Applied Sciences, Erfurt, Germany. Professor Qamar has also attended the Advanced Management Programme (AMP 2005) at the Clare College, Cambridge (UK) and the Leadership Development Programme (2011) at Yale (New Haven, USA).

Dr. Qamar's involvement with issues concerning higher education dates back to mid 1980 with his research and publications on financing and financial administration of higher education. With keen research interest in public policy in higher education, Professor Qamar has been actively engaged in research and has published books and papers in journals of repute on such themes as educational planning and administration, financing of education, cost savings and resource use efficiency in education and quality and excellence in higher education. His research work on Resource Utilisation in Higher Education (undertaken at NIEPA as co-investigator) provided valuable input in the formulation of Higher Education Policy during the 8th Five Year Plan. He was very actively involved in providing inputs in the formulation of 10th and 11th Five Year Plan strategies for higher education.

It is, therefore, no surprise that Professor Furqan Qamar has, during the past three decades, chaired and been members of a large number of committees, working groups and task forces constituted to strategise and implement various aspects of higher education in the Country by the Planning Commission, Ministry of Human Resource Development, University Grants Commission, All India Council for Technical Education

etc. Many universities in the Country have benefitted immensely from his knowledge, experience and wisdom by appointing him as Member of their Executive Council, Academic Council, Finance Committee, Faculty/School Board and Board of Studies. He coordinated, at the behest of the University Grants Commission the first Meet of the Vice Chancellors of Central Universities in the Country, a series of four Regional and a National Conferences of the Vice Chancellors of all Universities and also the Meet of Vice Chancellors/Directors of Technological Universities/Higher Educational Institutions at the behest of the All India Council of Technical Education.

Besides his leadership qualities, administrative acumen and ideational thinking, he has the remarkable ability to articulate ideas based on his understanding of the issues involved in the discussion and these are invariably supported by facts and figures. Most importantly, he has the ability to translate ideas into action with total commitment and dedication and more importantly, he is able to take all stakeholders along. What stands out the most about him is his integrity, human qualities, inter-personal skills and ability to work as a team with his seniors, fellow colleagues and juniors. What distinguishes him the most is the respect that he has for democratic dialogue and the ability to arrive at consensus through democratic decision-making process.

Having widely travelled across the length and breadth of the Country and also abroad to Canada, United States, United Kingdom, Germany, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Oman, Sri Lanka and Malaysia, Professor Qamar has seen and interacted with higher educational leaderships in wide-ranging number and type of universities and colleges. He thus brings with him academic eminence, leadership qualities and exposure to best global practices. At this crucial juncture when higher education is experiencing a paradigm shift and the system is reeling under the strains of rapid multifarious changes warranting creative and innovative solutions, a person of the eminence of Professor Furqan Qamar, who has had such a vast experience of working in various capacities and has dealt with a variety of issues concerning higher education has been appointed to be the Secretary General of AIU, a premier apex body of Higher Education in India which has been playing a vital role for the last 89 years in the development of higher Education System of the Country. Obviously, it's a challenging role !

Commencing his teaching career at a premier college in Lucknow, to being the Founder Director of a Business School at a premier Central University in New Delhi, to becoming Advisor at the Planning

Commission of India, to becoming the youngest Vice Chancellor of the largest State University of Rajasthan in the Pink City, to becoming the Founder Vice Chancellor of a Central University, located in the serene, beautiful Himalayan Kangra Valley, and then occupying the position of Secretary General of the Association of Indian Universities (AIU) and being the Principal Executive Officer of the world's largest and oldest association of universities, and that too, at such a young age!! Professor Qamar's is a great success story to inspire the youngsters and to delight the elderly well-wishers and more importantly to assure the higher education fraternity.

The Association of Indian Universities welcomes him as its New Secretary General and is looking forward to gain from his academic acumen, vast experience and indelible leadership skills.