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VCs' tenure for five years may slow down pace of research and collaboration

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University Grants Commission's (UGC) new draft regulations mandating deemed to be universities to fix the tenure of vice-chancellors (VCs) for a maximum of five years with no reappointment has sparked debate among the VCs, heads of academic departments, and promoters of several universities.

"In a tenure of five years, it is quite possible that the undertaken initiatives may not reach full fruition as their implementation is a time-consuming process. I completed two years this November as the VC of the university and the remaining three years of my tenure will be over in the blink of an eye while executing the various new initiatives in such a large university that has 7-8 campuses, 44 departments, 1100 faculty members, and more than 20000 students. So, at least two tenures to serve as a VC should

be provided in the new regulation for ensuring leadership stability and continuity. Restricting the reappointment serves no benefit either to the university's performance outcome or attracting quality faculty or more student admissions. Thus having VCs for a minimum of 10 years is the only alternative," says Raj Singh, vice-chancellor, JAIN (Deemed-to-be University).

One of the factors for the top 20-30 private universities gaining good rank, and accreditation is the long tenure for the VCs, says Singh.

The regulation may open doors for UGC interference and intervention every five years and this is against the NEP 2020. "Granting more

autonomy to deemed to be university is mentioned in the NEP 2020. However, the introduced regulation disallows reappointment, curtails institutes' freedom and put them at disadvantage," adds Singh.

Sibaram Khara, vice-chancellor, School of Medical Sciences and Research (SMSR), Sharda University, views these regulations to be in the favour of varities' growth and development. "The move to fix the VC term for five years is not discouraging because this will avoid stagnancy of the VC. Now onwards, the focus will shift to making real contributions and achievements in the capacity of VC within five years. This in turn will fast-track the educational transfor-



Due to this regulation many progressive initiatives meant for the university may remain incomplete

nation of the varsity," explains Khara. Shyam Menon, vice-chancellor, BML Munjal University says, "The intellectual standing of a university doesn't necessarily come from a single leader. VC's tenure of five years is a reasonably long period for reforms to be initiated and counting the positive side." Menon adds, "Leadership in academic institutions is always a collective one and it will be a healthy practice to bring in new people and ideas into institutional leadership periodically. Moreover, it is good for an incumbent vice-chancellor not to be a candidate for a second term, adding to the integrity and credibility of the office of vice-chancellor."