HYDERABAD, An important meeting of University of Sindh’s Quality Enhancement Cell (SU QEC) was held at QEC office under the chair of the Director Dr Azhar Ali Shah which discussed to improve the ranking of the University after considering the motives as to why the alma mater remained unable to attain a mentionable number in Higher Education Commission (HEC) ranking.

The meeting was attended by QEC Program and Assessment Team members from all departments, centers and institutes. The meeting observed that the data sent to HEC by the SU QEC was also not up to the mark. In this regard, it was unanimously agreed that the QEC program team members at each department/center/institute will gather the updated data within one week and the Director SU QEC will request the HEC authorities for reviewing the ranking in the light of the new data of the varsity.

It said: “The HEC should also make the process of ranking transparent as at present no one knows about the integrity of the panel of judges and involvement/awareness of all the stake holders before the process of ranking.”

The meeting recommended the SU Vice-Chancellor to take eight measures as a remedy to improve the ranking of the University of Sindh including approaching Sindh government/HEC for special grant to purchase at least 5000 computers in order to be at par with the University of Karachi & the University of Punjab, SU must have more than 1200 posts of faculty members but almost half of them are lying vacant which need to be filled immediately on the basis of open merit, approaching the HEC for special indigenous scholarships in order to facilitate and engage the faculty members who have recently completed their PhD locally and globally, increasing and utilizing the University budget for frequently arranging research and training activities including seminars, workshops and conferences, initiating implementation of the ISO certification and computerized Campus Management System to automate all admin and academic activities, communicating with all the PhD faculty members to apply for the HEC approved supervisor recognition, travel, research grants as well as arrangement of conferences and workshops, communicating to all the Head of Departments, Deans and PVCs of additional campuses to arrange faculty training workshops at least once a year at their respective departments/campuses and as per example of the International Islamic University (IIU) Islamabad the QEC program team members should be paid an honorarium of Rs.2000/- per month for the extra work they do in terms of data collection and record keeping.

Talking about the recently issued HEC ranking, Dr Azhar Ali Shah briefly told the members that the HEC ranking for the year 2011-12 (July 1, 2011 to June 30, 2012) was mostly based on the quantitative study of the teaching, research and implementation of the Quality Assurance (QA) Criteria adding that the reason of going down of Sindh University in the ranking from teaching point of view even from University of Punjab and the University of Karachi is only that it faces scarcity of resources and the resources are counted as a key part of the ranking.

He said: “These resources include the total number of computers (SU has only 1500 computers while KU and PU have more than 5000 computers each), number of full time faculty members (SU has around 600 full time faculty members while KU and PU have more than 1000 full time faculty members each) and the resources play a vital role to increase a number of PhD faculty members and also the PhD output.

Dr. Shah further said that the ranking for research was based on the number of conferences/seminars/workshops arranged by the University; the number of HEC recognized supervisors, the number of research articles, the indexing and citations of the research articles, the number of HEC travel grants, research grants, indigenous scholars and the number of HEC recognized journals published by the University were also counted.

Most of these parameters depend upon the availability of funds from HEC and it is a track record that since the last couple of years HEC has turned down may applications and proposals of SU faculty members on the pretext of paucity of funds. The facts and figures of other Universities indicate how generously HEC approves grants to them as compared to the University of Sindh. He lamented.

He said that the third parameter for ranking included the implementation of the QA criteria while according to him; Sindh University fulfilled all the requirements except the formation of Standing Committee on Plagiarism which will soon be notified.