



# UNION CHRISTIAN COLLEGE

## ALUVA-2



SSR 5<sup>th</sup> CYCLE 2023



Criterion 7

7.3.1 Institutional Distinctiveness



## **Institutional Distinctiveness: “SAHABHAGA” - Participatory Governance towards Holistic Development**

Union Christian College (UCC) in Aluva is built upon the fundamental principle of actualizing the value of universal humanism. It has consistently demonstrated an unwavering commitment to providing holistic education that goes beyond academic excellence. UCC's dedication to academic excellence, reflected in its NIRF ranking of 77, results in a remarkable proportion of students pursuing higher education and securing placements.

- **Participatory Governance**

Participatory Governance with its emphasis on participative management, democratic union activities, leadership development, and overall growth, has emerged as a distinctive feature fostering the holistic development of students, creating a dynamic and inclusive educational environment. UCC's participatory governance promotes a culture of participation, fosters democratic union activities among students, groom leadership qualities among students and staff, and facilitates holistic development within the college community. A group of staff members were instrumental in the founding of the college in 1921. For over a century, the Governance of the college upheld notions of decentralization and ensured equitable participation of faculty members in the administration of the college.

Specifically, an Inter-Church Fellowship (ICF), a body comprised of faculty members, is responsible for the coordination of the functioning of the college. Standing Council of the college includes eight representatives from the ICF other than the Principal and the Bursar. The Standing Council secretary will be a member of the faculty; (s)he is the one who represents the college in various legal/official proceedings.



The Principal is the nodal point of decision making and wholesome planning of the daily manoeuvring of the College. This inclusivity carries over further, with a faculty member being the Bursar of the college, responsible for managing the financial aspects of the college. Furthermore, a faculty member will be the Works Superintendent of the college, responsible for coordinating the various infrastructure development and maintenance activities on campus. Faculty members also occupy the role of wardens of the hostels.

Two members of the College Staff Council are elected from amongst the faculty through elections held in a democratic way. The **Deans** of the institution are selected on the basis of their academic merit, years of experience and concurrent professional skills. Also, the headship of departments is rotated on the basis of seniority.

Again, reflective of the college's vision, there is ample involvement of students, alumni PTA and community leaders in academic and non-academic activities. Student leaders, elected following a presidential model of election, and class representatives, form part of the various committees constituted for the smooth conduct of myriad programmes. As per requirement, committees constituted have a composition comprising of teachers, non-teaching staff, present and old students, and a local body representative. Hostel student leaders participate actively in hostel administration.

- **Inclusiveness**

UCC not only prioritizes diversity in its faculty but also ensures inclusivity in its student body. The institution actively recruits teaching and non-teaching staff from a wide range of socioeconomic classes, encompassing Scheduled Castes (SC), Other Backward Classes (OBC), and other minority groups. This commitment extends to student admissions, with 13.2% of enrolled students hailing from reserved classes, including a primitive tribe. UCC's dedication to inclusivity is further exemplified through scholarship programmes that specifically target



economically disadvantaged students, facilitating their access to high-quality education. The college's unique approach to cultural diversity is evident in its prayer, which incorporates verses from both the Bible and Upanishads, symbolizing a harmonious coexistence of different faiths. Through initiatives like the Service Learning Centre, which engages with Japanese students and facilitates reciprocal visits, UCC actively promotes a global perspective, nurturing a sense of global citizenship among its students.

- **Heritage Preservation**

UCC's unwavering dedication to heritage preservation manifests prominently in the meticulous upkeep of historical edifices like the Kacheri Malika. This architectural marvel, once the Diwan's palace and British Revenue Office, encapsulates the institution's commitment to cultural and historical perpetuity. By repurposing it into an educational and cultural nucleus, the college ensures that its students are not only recipients of knowledge but also stewards of their cultural lineage. The Kacheri Malika serves as a living reminder, fostering a profound connection to the past and instilling a profound sense of identity and legacy in the student body. Mahatma Gandhi's visit, commemorated by his inscription in the visitor's diary and the enduring mango tree he planted, symbolizes the college's homage to noble ideals and enduring principles. Furthermore, UCC's eco-friendly initiatives, encompassing walkways and water harvesting, underscore a conscientious endeavour to honour and comprehend the natural environment enveloping the college, aligning with its holistic commitment to heritage and sustainability.

Participatory governance in an educational context involves the active engagement of stakeholders such as faculty, staff, students, and local communities in decision-making processes. This inclusive approach ensures collective decision-making on heritage preservation,



drawing on diverse insights for comprehensive strategies in conserving historical elements within the college. The involvement of local communities and alumni fosters a sense of ownership, pride, and financial support for heritage preservation projects. Moreover, participatory governance promotes diversity and inclusivity by encouraging representation from various social, economic, and cultural groups. These stakeholders can contribute valuable perspectives, knowledge, and even financial support for heritage preservation projects. Participatory governance encourages representation from various sections of the college community, promoting diversity and inclusivity. It addresses the specific needs of marginalized groups, ensuring equitable resource distribution. This representation ensures that decisions consider the needs and perspectives of different social, economic, and cultural groups within the college. Inclusiveness is reinforced through the fair distribution of resources and opportunities. Participatory governance mechanisms can help identify and address the specific needs of marginalized or underrepresented groups, ensuring that heritage preservation efforts benefit the entire community.

Collaborative planning of cultural events under participatory governance celebrates diverse heritage, fostering inclusivity and awareness. UCC stands as a progressive example, embodying participative management, inclusiveness, and heritage preservation, contributing to the development of responsible, empowered, and visionary leaders.