The COVID-19 pandemic has thrust every nation to a new dimension. In particular, education system is thrown to an uncharted path. Outbreak of infectious disease has prompted widespread closure of schools and institutions around the world. Bhutan also closed all the educational institutions and training centers to contain the virus. As elsewhere, Gedu College of Business Studies was also mandated to close for four months. Online education, using video conference platforms such as Zoom was the only panacea to continue the teaching and learning process. Online teaching, an uncharted path that the college could ever imagine, brought many challenges whilst remarkable benefits.

Foremost challenge was self-discipline of the students. One of the attributes of effectiveness of e-class is the discipline of the students. As most of the students were novel to online classes, they found it difficult to stay on top of their feet to concentrate during the class and sometimes even to attend the class since they were not being forced to go to a classroom with compulsory attendance and a tutor to keep them on their toes. Accessibility was another challenge. Though online education can be accessible from anywhere anytime, students in rural areas were deprived of proper online education due to besetting issue of not having a decent internet connection. Students shared their grievances of not being able to download the reading materials, notes and reference materials and to upload the assignments and homework. Some even complained about not being were able to attend the online classes owing to unstable internet connectivity.

On the other hand, online teaching had given the students an avenue to be independent, responsible learners. With limited lectures of two hours per module in a week, students were compelled to study themselves most of the time and most of the topics. So, this experience gave students opportunities to delve further into the topics, enticed by their tutors, and decipher them themselves. Further, it was also an opportunity for students to self-discipline and self-motivate to study. For tutors, it was an opportunity to explore and
handle new technological medium and online platforms, which otherwise would have remained unfamiliar. For the management, it was a much needed break to figure out where it was lagging technologically.

Certainly, online education was the only elixir to keep alive the teaching and learning process during such unfortunate times. It was the best alternative, if not the least bad alternative, to circumvent the status-quo.

**Say No more to Guest house for Girls**

*Kelden Wangchuk (Media Club Coordinator Male)*

With the capacity to accommodate close to 256 students, the college has started to build a new hostel for girls. The purpose of the project was to accommodate more number of students as well as to ease out the existing hostels from major repair maintenance. The project cost was estimated around Nu. 122.531 million and will be ready for use from 2021 fall semester.

Interestingly, the project is the first pre-engineered building (PEB) in the country. PEB is a metal building which is designed and fabricated by PEB manufacturers which is later shipped to site for assembling. As per the Real State Officer, the materials are imported from India and the construction project was given to CDCL.
Final Exam for Final Year’s Students: Hope against All Odds

Tenzin Dorji (Academic Representative)

Final year students were worried about their research project as their group members were out of reach, and they could not meet their mentors. The tension for their academic marks grew intense as the time progressed. On 25th June, 2020 students got the news of reopening of the college from 1st July 2020. However, students’ were devastated when they heard exams would be held on 10th July, 2020. They started making calls to Academic Representatives, other leaders and program management for extension date of exam. Students got approximately 12 hours of lecture for each module and some lecturers felt confident that students would able to sit for exams. Although the ground reality was that students were not confident to write in-person exams.

Students did not have any options than to face the reality. Luckily, program management was so considerate to extend exam commencement date to 18th July, 2020. Students got enough time to prepare for their final exam. Despite those challenges and hurdles, the final year students made it. They wrote their exams. Perhaps, they fought against all odds.
Cleaning Campaign

Sangay Choden (Media Coordinator, Female)

On 12th July 2020, the students along with faculty members of GCBS organized a cleaning campaign initiated by the President and the Deans. The campaign, as per the college calendar, was considered an important event. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, only final year students were able to participate in the campaign. They were supervised by the designated lecturers, and the program started late at 2:00 pm in the afternoon due to incessant rain in the morning.

Such programs are especially organized to impart values on environmental cleanliness and promote ownership of cleanliness in one’s place of residence.

RES302: Research Presentation and Disclosure for Final Year Students

Karma Gyeltshen (GSEC Coordinator)

Finding what has not been found before could be hard, however, every year the final year students of Gedu College of Business Studies have to take research as one of the modules. The students prepare with the theoretical concepts and methods of research in the fifth semester as to abet themselves while doing research practically in their final semester. The students form groups comprising not more than 6 members and a mentor. It normally begins with a proposal, midterm report and
final submission followed by presentation. The situation this year was different because of the Covid-19.

On March 18th 2020, on the date of submission of research proposal, the students were sent home considering the risk of Covid-19. Hence, the proposal submission was delayed. The students were perplexed at first as they were severed physically with their group mates. Nevertheless, as the situation prolonged, they share that they have adapted to virtual discussion mostly by Zoom.

As the semester-end approached and the situation dimmed, the final year students were called back to college by the end of June. They were anxious as the imperative and weighty component of their research module fell on their shoulders. As the dates for final report submission (22nd July) and presentation (from 29th till 1st of August 2020) were announced, respective mentors were also equally worried as they had fewer meetings with their groups due to Covid-19.

As the final report weighs 40% and the presentation takes 20% of the total marks, the college also witnessed students booking classes and empty spaces for discussion and preparation. As concerned as the students are, the mentors also called their groups for mock presentation.

Unlike in the previous year, all the panel members this year were the lecturers of the college. They were divided into groups of three panel members, and the students were allocated an hour each for presentation including question and answer session. Students shared that they were scrutinized and made accountable for what they have contributed to the research work. Despite difficulties posed by convid-19, almost all the projects were accepted. Like the panelists, the students felt satisfied with their progress in research work. Finally, all the students passed RES 302: Research Project.
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