Royal University of Bhutan

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Strategic Plan 2030

PREFACE

The RUB Strategic Plan 2018-2030 is the third Strategic Plan for the Royal University of Bhutan. The document is the result of extensive consultations with key stakeholders including the ten Ministries of the Government, Royal Civil Service Commission, and several eminent persons.

The document has drawn inspiration from the collection of His Majesty's speeches on various occasions. We have also referred to the Vision 2020 document, Economic Development Policy 2016, the Tertiary Education Roadmap for Bhutan 2017-2027, 12th FYP preparation guidelines and many other relevant documents in the process of drafting the Plan.

Within the University, a two-day brainstorming session was held in each College followed by a three-day workshop where the all the leaders of the University came together to identify key areas of development resulting in the overall University targets. A separate meeting was also held to specifically discuss on the proposed new programmes and projected student numbers.

The document was thoroughly deliberated in the Academic Planning and Resources Committee (APRC) and the Academic Board (AB) before the University Council endorsed it on 6 April 2018.

The whole process of developing the Plan took more than a year.

The Strategic Plan development was carried out simultaneously with the preparation of the University's 12th FYP objectives and the whole process of consultations and scrutiny in the preparation of both the documents with various bodies of the University proved very useful in the finalization of the University's 12th FYP goals.

This Strategic Plan provides the basis for the development of all activities of the Royal University towards achieving its vision of becoming an internationally recognized University. The document provides the guidelines for the preparation of all its short and medium term plans, and monitoring and evaluation of the University's progress.

I would like to thank all colleagues in my office and Colleges and other Stakeholders for their valuable comments, insights and substantial inputs towards developing this important document.

I am very hopeful and confident that this Plan document will provide the necessary clarity and guidance as we move towards the next crucial phase of development of the University, which is a very important institution of public service in our country.

Vice Chancellor

Introduction

The Strategic Plan 2018-2030 of the Royal University of Bhutan (RUB) is guided by His Majesty the King's wisdom for greater wellbeing of the country.

Education is a social equalizer, the foundation for a strong democracy, a healthy economy and national security, and the guardian of national culture and heritage. Underpinned by this understanding, the role of Bhutanese youth is considered paramount in achieving the development vision of GNH in the 21st century through the five extraordinary qualities of Sincerity, Mindfulness, Astuteness, Resilience, and Timelessness (SMART) that have defined the character of Bhutanese people throughout history.

Higher education must contribute towards the creation of a knowledge-based society where development is spurred by research, creativity and innovation, and a culture of life-long learning. Through it, Bhutanese youth who are the country's future citizens, should be able to develop knowledge and competencies, cultivate the timeless values of kindness, compassion, and humanity, and the ability to pursue economic growth.

With its key mandates to provide higher education, research for knowledge and development, and service, the Royal University of Bhutan has a vital role to play in achieving national goals. Since its establishment in 2003, RUB has developed physical infrastructure, operational systems and processes, new academic programmes, and human capacity to meet emerging needs and challenges. Through these endeavours, RUB has created a conducive environment for Bhutanese youth to pursue higher education.

The next phase of RUB's development, as envisaged in its Strategic Plan 2018-30, will emphasize the consolidation of its efforts to provide quality learning and teaching, research, and service which are considered the sources of innovation and creative solution to national development issues.

Towards this end, RUB will continue to develop its human resource capacity, academic programmes especially at the postgraduate level, and research infrastructure, and create an enabling environment that ensures excellence in student learning and achievement.

Vision, Mission and Core Values

Vision

- An internationally recognized university steeped in GNH values

Mission

- To provide programmes of study at tertiary education level, of relevance and good quality which will fulfil the needs of the country for an educated, skilled and humane population;

- To promote and conduct research to contribute to the creation of knowledge of relevance to Bhutan, and

- To provide training and professional services for the enhancement of knowledge, capacity building and community development.

Key

Core Values

- Love of learning
- Compassion and fairness
- Creativity and innovation
- Community service
- Accountability
- Responsibility
- Professionalism
- Respect for diversity of views
- Respect for the environment

Aspirations

1. RUB as the preferred destination for higher education
2. RUB graduates recognized by employers and Universities both within and outside the country
3. RUB offering an increasing number of postgraduate (Masters and PhD) programmes
4. RUB to diversify revenue streams
5. RUB as a knowledge hub for society
6. RUB as a provider of life-long learning opportunities
7. RUB as a practitioner and promoter of GNH values
8. RUB campuses with adequate, inclusive and quality facilities and services
9. RUB to draw highly qualified and motivated staff
10. RUB as a promoter of entrepreneurship
11. RUB has active collaboration with reputed external institutions
12. RUB recognized by key accreditation bodies

Table 1 - Key performance indicators and milestones

Sl. No	Key Performance Indicator	Unit of Measurement	Baseline year	Target
			2017	**2030**
1	Students enrolled from the top 500 ranked students in Class XII	%	NA	32
2	International students enrolled	%	0.3	2.3
3	Graduates employed within one year of graduation	%	72	78
4	Students enrolled in postgraduate programmes	Number	777	2812
5	Annual budget generated from sources other than tuition	%	7	15
6	Peer reviewed publications	Number	71	1722
7	Research and scholarly outputs leading to innovation, policy and practices	Number	15	111
8	Externally funded research projects	Number	39	680
9	Academics engaged in various external decision making forums	Number	63	92
10	Participants in short courses	Number	1174	19064
11	Staff satisfaction	%	NA	85
12	Student satisfaction	%	NA	87.5
13	Students participating in community services	%	32	70
14	Students in conflict with law	%	0.05	0.01
15	Startups initiated by graduates within 1 year of graduation	Number	6	303
16	Accreditation of College or Programme	Number	5	22
17	Attrition rate	%	2	2
18	Academics selected against advertised post	%	49	94

Situational Analysis

RUB as the most preferred destination among Bhutanese and international students

RUB receives adequate number of students on government scholarships. However, some of the top-notch students apply for various scholarships to pursue higher education outside the country, especially in India although similar programmes are offered at RUB. This clearly indicates that RUB needs to enhance its visibility among the Bhutanese students to attract them to RUB Colleges.

RUB has not been able to get all its vacancies filled especially in the self-financed student category. Each year more than 150 students do not report to RUB though they apply and confirm their admission at the time of selection. This may be an indication that many potential self-financed students do not prefer to study in RUB. One possible reason could be due to the fee structure where self-financed students have to pay tuition which may be very higher than the tuition colleges in the region charge.

RUB is yet to enrol international students. Beside four to five students from the region, RUB has not been able to enrol international students in award-bearing programmes. A modest beginning has been made by opening up avenues for study abroad programmes. RUB currently does not have adequate infrastructure and facilities to enrol international students. It has been observed that international students are usually interested to pursue studies at postgraduate level and RUB has limited number of postgraduate programmes, which limits its ability to enrol international students.

RUB graduates recognized by job markets and universities both within and outside the country

As of 2016, 70% of RUB's graduates get employed within six months to one year of graduation. The RCSC reports that RUB graduates are generally among the top performing candidates in BCSE and are mostly recruited into the civil service. However, the job market within the country is getting saturated, while the number of graduates from RUB is still on the rise. There is empirical evidence that shows that the number of graduates seeking employment outside the country is still negligible.

Students are enrolled in a wide range of academic programmes in RUB. The distribution of students across different areas of academic programmes is as shown in figure A:
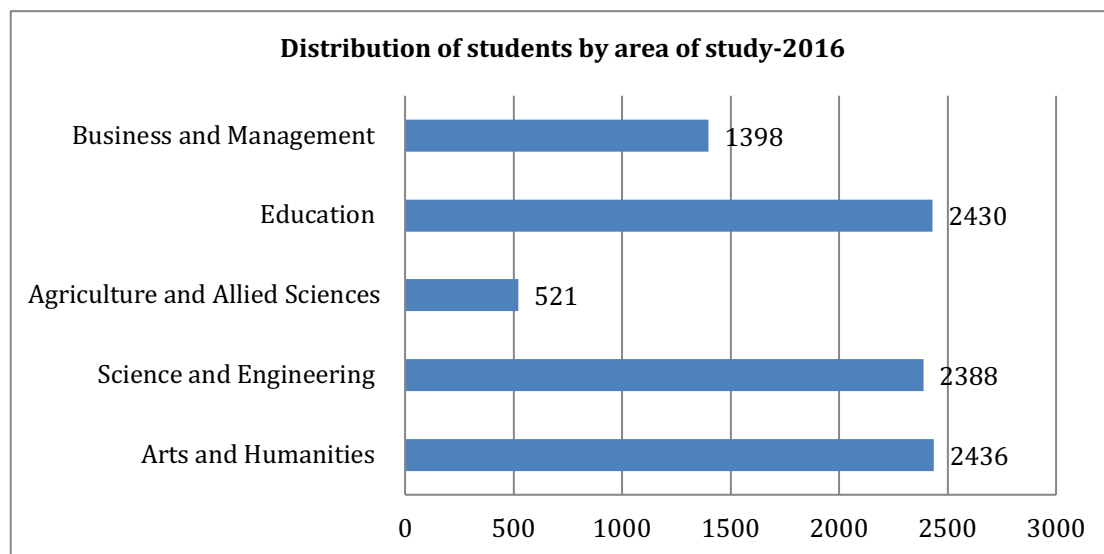

Figure A – Distribution of students in RUB by area of area, 2016

While enrollment in RUB has been increasing rapidly, there has been a concern that a significant proportion of students (27% of total students) are enrolled in Arts and Humanities programmes. MoLHR has raised concerns that a large number of graduates unemployed are from the Arts and Humanities streams. However, of late, it has been observed that even graduates from Science and Engineering programmes are increasingly not getting employed.
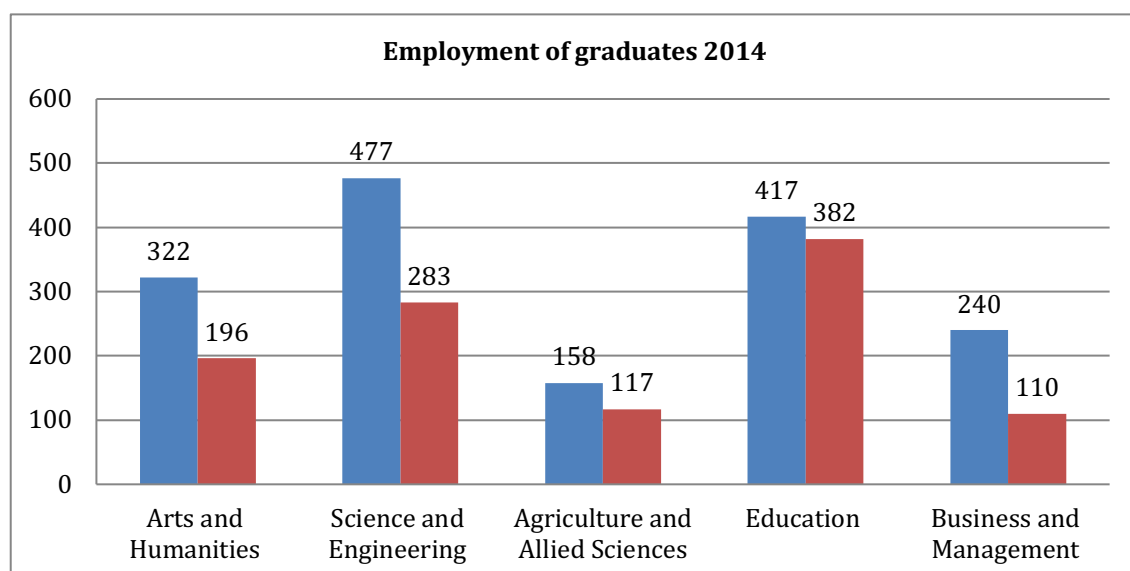

Figure B – Employment of RUB graduates, 2014

A large number of RUB graduates continue to seek admissions in other universities to upgrade their qualification. Whilst many of them do not face issues during application, a few of the graduates have not been accepted by some universities in Australia, New Zealand and Europe. This could be attributed to lack of accreditation of academic programmes within the country. Additionally, other factors such as limited linkages and activities that promote visibility outside the country such as joint research, publications, staff and student mobility, hamper RUB's recognition outside the country. Some RUB graduates have also reported that external universities do not accept their degrees because the duration of some bachelor level programmes in RUB is only three years while the requirement for admission to masters programmes in many universities outside Bhutan is a four year bachelor's degree. There have been reports that some of the awards of RUB are equated with associate degrees.

A significant observation and concern made by stakeholders and employers is that RUB graduates lack generic skills such as communication skills.

RUB colleges offering a good number of postgraduate programmes especially masters and PhDs

The overall number of programmes has increased from 37 in 2008 to 60 programmes in 2016. Postgraduate programmes have also increased from 4 in 2008 to 12 in 2016 as shown in Figure C. Some more postgraduate programmes are in the process of being developed.
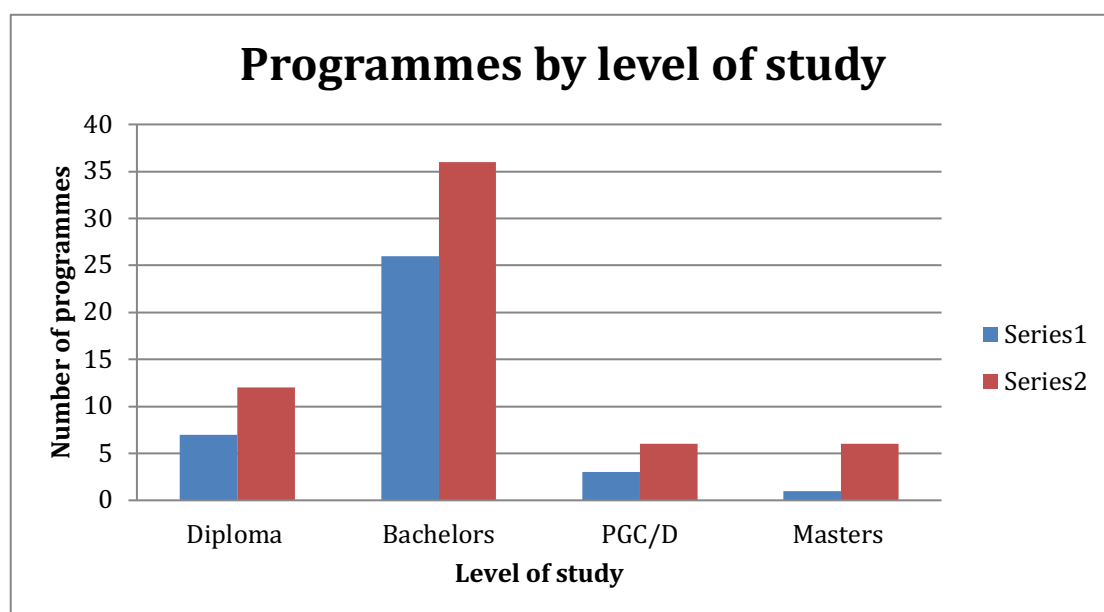

Figure C – Programmes by Level of Study at RUB

80% of the programmes are at the undergraduate level. There are only about six postgraduate certificate/diploma and six masters' programmes on offer. This is in contrast with more mature universities elsewhere where postgraduate level offerings are significant in terms of number and as compared with undergraduate programmes.
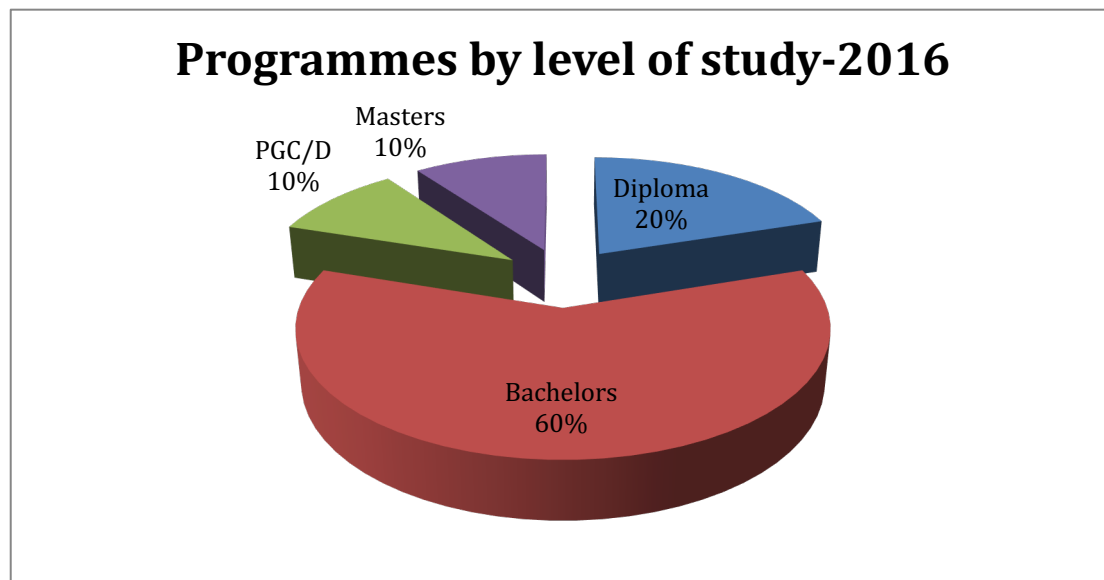

Figure D – RUB Programmes by Levels of study, 2016

The limited number of postgraduate programmes limits the ability of RUB colleges to achieve deeper specialization in the academic disciplines and to promote research. This is mostly due to lack of funding support from the government. Currently, most of the master's programmes such as MDP, Masters in NRM, MBA and MA are run with very small number of students (Eg.3 in NRM in 2016 intake).

RUB to become self-sustainable

With autonomy, RUB has to be responsible for its long-term sustainability and financial solvency. Currently, RUB is fully dependent on student tuition for its operation. The constant increase in the cost of operation due to increase in pay and allowances, inflation on educational materials and other operational goods and services pose enormous pressure on the income generated through student tuition. As a result, RUB needs to explore other sources of income to augment income received through tuition.
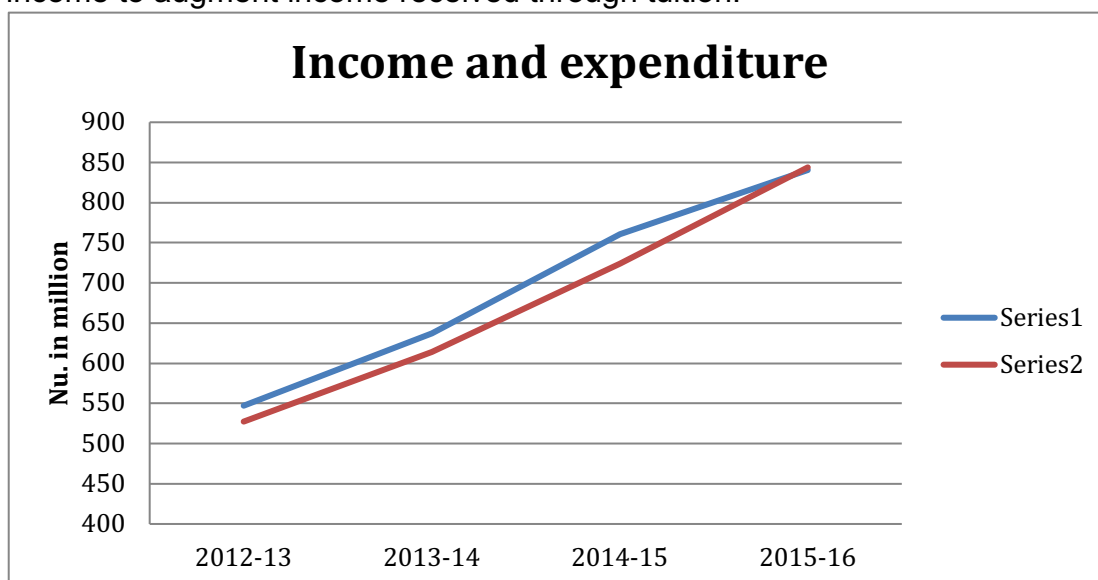

Figure E – Income and Expenditure at RUB

As given in Figure E, the expenditure has increased over income. RUB will need to be more proactive and creative to cover the deficit. Lack of other sources of income pose a huge challenge and threatens RUB sustainability.

RUB as a think-tank for the society with vibrant culture of research and innovation: each college recognized as a centre of excellence in their respective areas of specialization

There has been some progress made on the research front. This includes developing research capacity by allocating funds for research at the central as well as college levels, establishment of various research centers and development of research policy including a research degrees framework for RUB. The University has seen an increase in the submission of research proposals for small grants, participation in conferences/seminars, publications, and research projects. The number of academics engaged in research has increased dramatically and external funds for research have been explored by some colleges. Overall, there has been a continuous increase in the expenditure on research as given in Figure F.
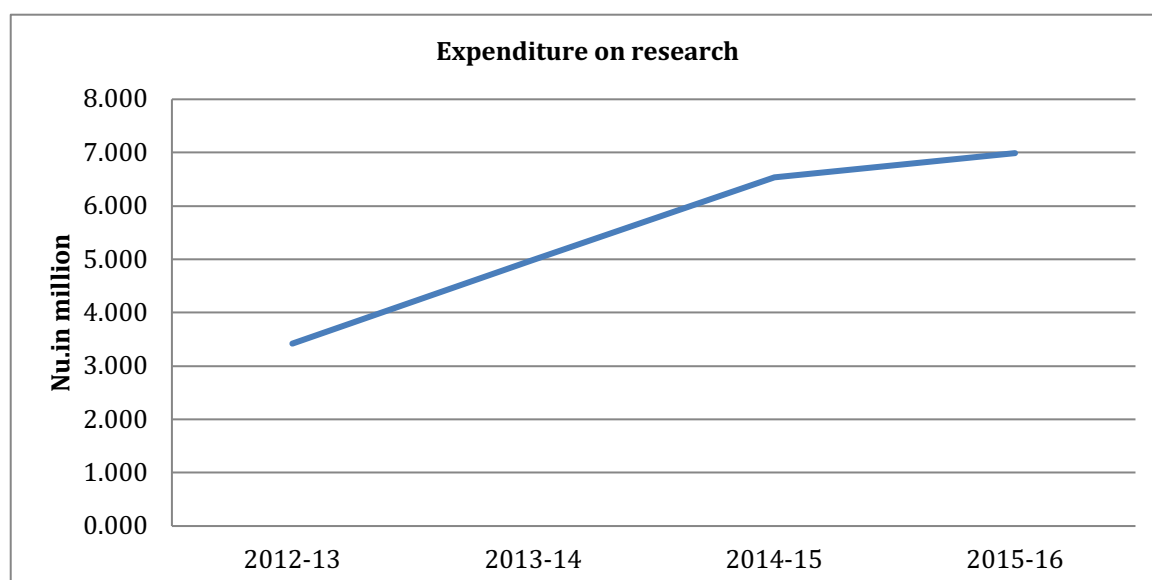

Expenditure on research

Figure F – Expenditure on Research at RUB

Although, there is remarkable progress made in research, only about 163 academics have been involved in research in 2014. It accounts for about 33% of the total academics in RUB. Therefore, there is still a need to scale up the research activities and projects. Lack of dedicated funding for postgraduate programmes especially research-based masters and PhD programmes has been a major challenge in promoting research. The absence of a national research funding mechanism has also affected the development of research in RUB.

In its aspiration to evolve as a hub of research and innovation – a think-tank, RUB will need to provide as many expert services to government and the

private sector. However, current policies requiring license adversely affects RUB's ability to compete for research based consultancy projects.

The university's industry linkages have to be enhanced. The current partnership is not adequate for the university to unleash its potentials.

RUB as a source of inspiration for lifelong learning

Providing lifelong learning opportunities is one of the pillars of a knowledge-based society. RUB must inspire society to engage in continuous learning, development of new knowledge, skills and competencies, and to nurture creativity and innovation for development.

RUB has been supporting this idea by offering various part-time programmes to suit the needs of working population as given in Table 2 below:

Table 2 – Part-time programmes at RUB

Sl. No	College	Programme	Students
1	College of Language and Culture Studies	B A Language and Culture	110
		M A in Dzongkha and Chokey	75
2	Paro College of Education	B Ed Dzongkha	39
		B Ed Primary	271
		Diploma in ECCD	29
		M Ed in Dzongkha	52
		M Ed in Leadership and Management	45
3	Samtse College of Education	Diploma in Library and Information Management	25
		Diploma in School Science Laboratory Management	30
		Pg Cert/Dip in Higher Education	46
		Pg Dip in Guidance and Counseling	23
4	Sherubtse College	Pg Dip in English	50
Total			795

RUB also allows working people to pursue higher education in its regular programmes. Specific arrangements for admission have been made to recognize prior learning experience, especially in CST and JNEC.

Various short-term training opportunities have been created for upgrading skills in the industries. This idea has been motivated by the knowledge that

the civil service in Bhutan plans to professionalize its various services. Consequently, RUB will have a lot of opportunities to grow in this area.

While part-time programmes are useful to promote lifelong learning, RUB needs to be selective as some policies such as the election regulations and BCSR do not recognize such programmes. RUB has not been proactive in developing various short-term training packages as required by the industries. The use of ICT as educational tool is just beginning to gather momentum in the university and the facilities are not adequate to offer online courses. RUB needs to enhance its capacity to handle ICT tools in teaching-learning.

RUB as a role model in practicing GNH values with corruption free and transparent decision making processes, including GNH based development of students with vibrant community service, active collaboration with stakeholders, and leadership qualities

RUB has adopted GNH inspired education as its guiding philosophy. Various initiatives such as offering programmes on universal human values, emphasis on personal development, spiritual discourses, community services, and mindfulness practices, have been taken.

However, this aspiration has not received adequate attention. There is a need to consolidate efforts to streamline and chart a way forward to take it to the next level of development. A major criticism in this area has been RUB's inability to develop programmes specific to GNH and also that the existing Human Values education is dependent mostly on external expertise. RUB has not been able to design relevant programmes based on this indigenous wisdom. The other important aspect of developing GNH attributes such as self-leadership, sense of responsibility and civic engagement should be promoted through conscious efforts and creation of such environment in the College campuses.

Campuses with state of the art facilities and comprehensive student support services

During the last two plan periods, about Nu. 3.500 billion worth of infrastructure and facilities were developed. However, RUB still has not been able to meet the requirement to provide state of the art facilities for quality student learning. The laboratories and workshops are still in need of more equipment. Hostels are still cramped with four to five students being placed in a room that is meant for two students. There are many old and dilapidated structures that require constant maintenance. In the last five years, RUB has been spending Nu.30 million annually on maintenance.

RUB as an employer by choice with highly qualified and motivated staff

The quality of education is directly dependent on the quality of academics. To this end, it is critical that RUB is able to develop a pool of highly qualified, dynamic and motivated staff.

As one of the main outcomes of the OD exercise, the university reformed its career structure for academics. It allows better incentives commensurate with qualification and experience. A robust performance management system has been designed based on international best practices to befit an academic institution.

However, RUB is still grappling with human resource quality having a large number of fresh graduates (127 in 2016) teaching undergraduate programmes in the colleges - a source of major concern regarding the quality of teaching and learning.
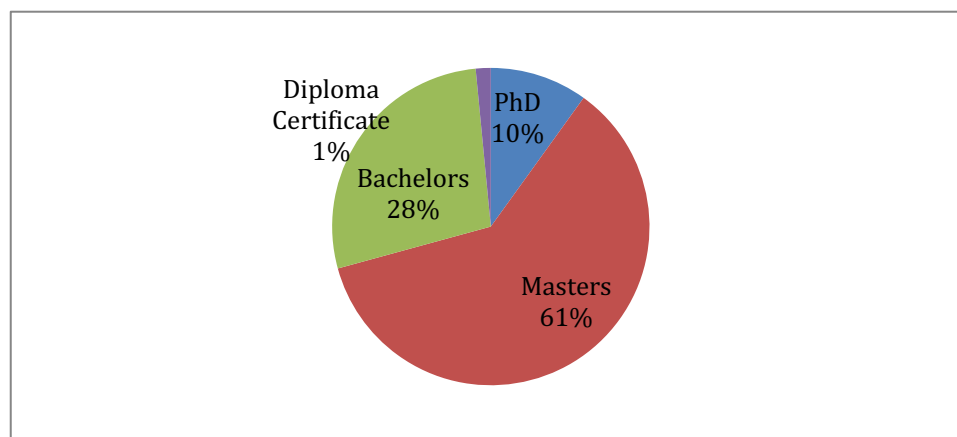

Figure G – Qualification of RUB's Academic Staff

RUB needs to attract and retain quality academics with the right level of academic qualification to ensure the quality of teaching and learning. This has been a big challenge for RUB as there is lack of qualified applicants for various academic positions being announced. The situation has been aggravated due to lack of dedicated funding to upgrade academic qualification of all academics who do not meet the minimum academic qualification requirement. RUB is highly dependent on open scholarships to upgrade the academic qualification of its academic staff over which it has not much control.

Strong culture of entrepreneurship and graduates highly inspired to be entrepreneurs

Access to higher education has been increasing in general. The gross enrollment ratio has increased from 10% in 2008 to about 22% in 2016. RUB's share of contribution has also increased from 6% in 2008 to about 12% in 2016. In other words, yearly intake in RUB has increased from 1000 in 2008 to 3184 in 2016. While the GER in tertiary education in Bhutan is much higher than in its neighbouring countries, it is still lower than the average GER of developing countries.
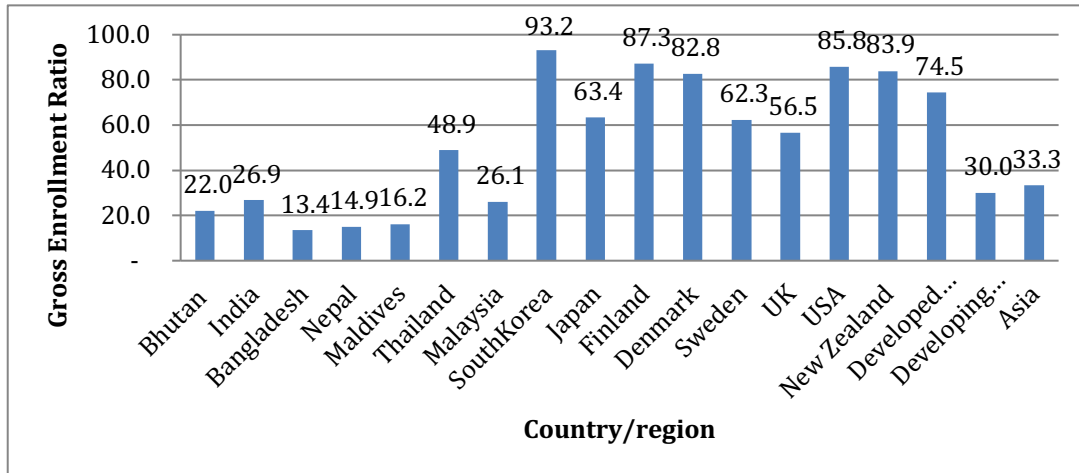

Figure H – GER in Tertiary Education

The GER of developed countries (Knowledge-based countries) are higher than that of Bhutan by 4 times. Although there is a need to increase GER substantially, the government through the articulation of the 12th FYP prioritizes quality enhancement over increasing access. Concerns have been raised that increase in access may not be important due to dwindling job opportunities for the graduates. However, the demand for tertiary education is continuously increasing as every parent wants to enrol their children in higher education irrespective of job opportunities.

In order to address this issue, the university must develop entrepreneurship skills among students so that they will be able to create job opportunities for themselves and others.

Several initiatves have been taken in this area such as :

- A module on entrepreneurship has been developed and is offered in colleges such as Sherubtse College, CNR and CST;

- GCBS has created an entrepreneurship development cell and offers entrepreneurship module as specialization;

- CNR has initiated a project in commercial farming to inspire entrepreneurship; and

- Business incubation centres are being created in some colleges such as GCBS, JNEC, CNR and Sherubtse College.

Themes of Development

1. Enhancement of Quality and Relevance of Programmes

1.1 Enhance human resources with committed funding for both short-term including in-house staff development programmes and long-term HRD
1.2 Recruit international academics for diversity and external inputs and advice for the development of new programmes
1.3 Reinvigorate teaching-learning practices
1.4 Reform existing admission policies and processes including a scholarship scheme
1.5 Develop quality infrastructure and facilities
1.6 Establish linkages with industries and identify mentors for student attachment
1.7 Strengthen International linkages and recognition leading to staff and student exchange programmes
1.8 Accomplish Accreditation by international accrediting bodies
1.9 Enhance provision of soft/transferable skills
1.10 Strengthen internal quality assurance and enhancement system
1.11 Diversify academic programmes and make them relevant to changing needs

Table 3 – Key Performance Indicators for enhancement of quality and relevance of programmes

Sl. No	Key Performance Indicator	Baseline Year	Target
		2017	**2030**
1	% of annual operating budget allocated for HRD	2	3
2	% of academics attending short term PD programmes annually	45	62
3	% of academics with Masters	69	87
4	% of academics with PhD	13	35
5	No of postgraduate programmes offered	15	67
6	No of international academics engaged	80	230
7	No of local experts outside the university engaged	65	214
8	No of academics on exchange/attachment to other universities annually	33	155
9	% of academics having qualification in teaching higher education	46	85
10	Number of students	9729	54729
11	% of self financed undergraduate students	16	25
12	No of new programmes offered	69	145
13	No of joint degree programmes	0	10

14	No of students sent for exchange/attachment	411	3165
15	No of active collaboration with external institutions for student learning, support and research	54	200
16	% of programmes with soft skills (transferable skills) as a learning outcome	63	79

2. Enhancement of Research, Innovation and Scholarship

2.1 Develop research capacity
2.2 Develop research partnerships with government agencies and international partners
2.3 Improve research infrastructure, facilities and services
2.4 Offer postgraduate programmes by research
2.5 Provide technical support for the establishment of a national research council
2.6 Encourage research scholars to undertake research activities abroad
2.7 Organize research conferences/seminars
2.8 Establish a university publishing house
2.9 Set out research priority areas for the University based on strengths
2.10 Provide central support services to mobilize research funding
2.11 Mobilize separate funds to help develop research capacity and infrastructure.

Table 4 KPIs for Enhance research and scholarship

Sl. No	Key Performance Indicator	Baseline Year	Target
		2017	**2030**
1	Number of Masters by research	2	22
2	Number of PhD programmes	0	7
3	Number of research grants received	51	165
4	% of annual budget for research allocated by the College	1	2.32
5	Number of joint research projects with national and international institutions	27	168
6	Number of books/book chapters etc. published	86	502
7	% of academics engaged in research	38	71
8	No of research events such as conferences and seminars organized	35	240
9	Number of prototypes/patents based on research	1	11
10	Establish publishing house	0	1

3. Promotion of GNH-Inspired Environment

3.1 Develop/Conduct values education workshops/sessions
3.2 Enhance good governance practices within the university operations characterized by transparency, accountability, efficiency and effectiveness and collaboration among colleges
3.3 Encourage initiatives for the promotion of culture and traditions
3.4 Initiate sustainable practices such as reducing paper usage, waste management, rainwater harvesting, solar lighting etc.
3.5 Provide adequate student support services with service standards/guidelines
3.6 Develop infrastructure as per the master plan including landscaping
3.7 Develop turnaround time and SOP and implement accordingly
3.8 Establish alumni associations or linkages with alumni
3.9 Set up community and staff welfare services
3.10 Strengthen Counseling services

Table 5 – Key Performance Indicators of GNH inspired Environment

Sl. No	Key Performance Indicator	Baseline Year	Target
		2017	2030
1	% of students covered by value education based on new initiatives and models	63	85
2	No of initiatives related to improvement of University governance	32	178
3	Number of projects/activities related to promotion of culture and tradition	54	523
4	Number of projects/activities related to environment-friendly practices	39	224
5	Number of community services annually	45	74
6	Number of members in Alumni Association	1513	12742
7	Childcare center established	0	5

4. Promotion of Innovation and Entrepreneurship

4.1 Offer entrepreneurship programme/modules/ courses
4.2 Establish business incubation centres
4.3 Establish linkages with financial institutions and relevant agencies for support
4.4 Incentivize entrepreneurial behaviour and innovations
4.5 Organize business events to promote entrepreneurship such as startup weekends
4.6 Provide technical support to accelerate innovation and entrepreneurship

Table 6 KPIs for Promoting innovation and entrepreneurship

Sl. No	Key Performance Indicator	Baseline Year	Target
		2017	**2030**
1	Number of students taking up entrepreneurship programme/module/course	789	11256
2	Number of business incubation centers	2	7
3	Number of business ideas accepted by investors	3	160
4	Number of entrepreneurship events organized	6	172
5	Number of beneficiaries of the business incubation center annually	42	65
6	No of students participating in business idea competition	60	463

5.   Promotion of Life-Long Learning

5.1   Provide part-time programmes to enhance learning opportunities
5.2   Offer various short-term PD courses
5.3   Enhance ICT infrastructure and facilities
5.4   Provide access to library facilities to the community
5.5   Open up learning centres in the colleges for the community

Table 7 – KPIs for Promoting Life-long Learning

Sl. No	Key Performance Indicator	Baseline Year	Target
		2017	**2030**
1	Number of Part-time programmes offered	13	10
2	Number of short term courses offered	55	208
3	Enhanced connectivity (mbps)	108	637

6.   Diversification of Revenue Streams

6.1   Explore additional sources of income such as endowment, gifts, alumni contribution, etc..
6.2   Explore and implement various investment plans
6.3   Create facilities and organizational units to support university enterprise
6.4   Develop and implement a comprehensive business plan
6.5   Offer courses in niche areas such as GNH, bio-diversity, water, Buddhism and Himalayan Studies, tourism etc.
6.6   Brand and promote the university for wider visibility
6.7   Hiring and rental of facilities (e.g. Games and sports facilities, auditorium, conference halls, residential buildings, cafeteria etc.)
6.8   Explore land lease/grant and PPP for development of infrastructure
6.9   Liaise with industries to identify and offer short courses
6.10 Advocate change in the policy environment to participate in competitive consultancy services
6.11 Enhance the number of international students
6.12 Explore research grants

Table 8 – KPIs for Diversification of revenue streams

Sl. No	Key Performance Indicator	Baseline Year	Target
		2017	**2030**
1	Number of new income sources identified and pursued (excluding research grant)	29	64
2	Number of investment plans identified and implemented	8	32
3	Number of branding and promotional activities	14	76

Implementation and Monitoring

Implementation strategy

1. The next two five year plans (2018-30) for RUB will be based on this strategic plan
2. The plan will be the basis to draw up the annual work plan.
3. This strategic plan will be the basis to draw annual performance agreements as we roll out the PMS effective from July 2017
4. Department of Planning and Resources shall support the Vice Chancellor to facilitate the implementation of these plans and programmes
5. The financial allocation and resource mobilization will be based on the performance target

Monitoring and evaluation

1. The Department of Planning and Resources shall support the Vice Chancellor in the monitoring of implementation status as agreed in this plan.
2. The frequency of the monitoring will be carried out on a quarterly basis against the targets and activities agreed in APA and AWP that are derived from this strategic plan.
3. The overall plan targets including KPIs may be reviewed once every 3 years.