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Prin. Dr. Navin M. Punjabi **Ref. No. :**

Report: Stakeholder Consultation on Student Council Elections

The meeting was convened to invite suggestions from Principals, teachers and students of various colleges on the conduct of Student Council elections under the Maharashtra Public Universities Act, 2016. Dr. Gayatri Agarwal and Dr. Shehnaaz Nazkani, along with two student representatives of the Students' Council attended a meeting held at the University of Mumbai.

The Maharashtra government's committee on reviving Student Council (Vidyarthi Parishad) elections consulted stakeholders from Mumbai's public universities and collected suggestions for its report.

Meeting details

Item	Details
Committee	Prof. Suhas Pednekar, Former Vice-Chancellor, University of Mumbai (Chair); Prin. Ajay Bhamare, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Member); Dr. Prasad Karande, Registrar (Member Secretary)
Participants	Senate and Council members, Principals, Teachers, Officers and Students of the University of Mumbai, SNDT Women's University and HBSU
Date and venue	October 15, 2026 at 4:30 pm. Rajiv Gandhi Centre for Comtemporary Studies, University of Mumbai.

Background and purpose

College elections stopped around 1990–94 after violence and political interference. A 2018 attempt under the Maharashtra Public Universities Act, 2016 did not succeed. The Committee is now revising the rules in line with NEP 2020 and consulting universities across the state.

The committee wants elections that teach students democracy and carry their problems to the administration. They should also be short, use technology, and keep divisions and party politics out.

Dr. Karande circulated a seven-question questionnaire on fair conduct, digital voting, political interference, nominations and reservation, the administration's role, council duties, and NEP 2020. The Chair asked for specific, actionable suggestions rather than speeches.

Key suggestions

Most Principals, Senate members, Teachers and Students agreed on eligibility safeguards, but views split on political involvement and on digital voting.

Candidate eligibility

- At least 75% attendance, no ATKT or a minimum marks cut-off, no criminal or police record, and age 18 or above
- Involve SY, TY and PG students rather than FY students, many of whom are under 18
- Cultural and sports representatives should hold at least a state-level prize

Mode of selection

- Many principals favoured merit-based selection of Class Representatives, or a collegium of about 15 members ranked by marks, attendance and activities
- Reserve nominations on the council for NSS, NCC, Sports, Cultural, Aavishkar, Youth Festival and DLLE
- Some students argued instead for every student's right to vote, and against judging candidates on marks alone

Political involvement

- One view: keep parties out, with candidates declaring no political links on the nomination form
- Another view: politics cannot be separated, so frame a strict code of conduct, with parties liable for damage and FIRs
- Coordinate the college, university and police to prevent malpractice; principals reported outside pressure at college gates

Voting and transparency

- Complete polling in a single day with immediate results, protecting the 90 mandatory teaching days per term
- Proposals ranged from online, Google Form or blockchain voting to ballot papers only, owing to tampering concerns
- A teacher from another college should observe polling, and an anonymous online portal should be created for complaints
- Hold elections in June–July, with division-wise polling across the University of Mumbai's jurisdiction

Preparation

- Orient students on the purpose of the council, and give candidates a short political-literacy course
- Keep a fallback plan if an elected representative is disqualified

Conclusion and next steps

The committee will combine these suggestions with those from other universities and also consult Parents before reporting to the government.

The Chair urged everyone to work for honest, transparent elections that keep the student at the centre. The meeting closed with a vote of thanks.