



யாழ்ப்பாணப் பல்கலைக்கழக ஆசிரியர் சங்கம்
யாழ்ப்பாணப் பல்கலைக்கழகம்
UNIVERSITY OF JAFFNA TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION
UNIVERSITY OF JAFFNA
Reg No.:- 8231

03.02.2017

**Executive
Committee**

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Dr.A.Saravanabawan

Vice President
Dr.K.Vignarooban

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Mr. S.Sivakanthan

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Dr.V.Yogaratnam
Dr.V.Shunmugarajah
Dr.K.Ketheeswaran
Mr.S.Sooriyakumar
Mr.K.Navaneethan

The Vice-Chancellor and Members of the Council

University of Jaffna

Dear Madam / Sir,

**Consideration of Prof. Sam - Thiagalingam for the Vice-Chancellor
Candidacy**

We want to draw your urgent attention that following the last council meeting, we came to know that the application of Prof. Sam - Thiagalingam for the Vice-Chancellor Candidacy was in the verge of being rejected due to one day delay in the receipt of his application by registered post. The University of Jaffna Teachers' Association (UJTA) Ex-Co has convened a meeting on Feb 2nd 2017 to discuss about how we could convince the council to re-consider his application for the betterment of the University of Jaffna as an impartial institution for the higher education.

UJTA also learned from some Council members that though Prof. Sam. Thiagalingam's application for the Vice-Chancellorship was received by the University a day after the deadline, it was processed and sent for evaluation, but at the last moment that application was in the verge of being rejected and on pending legal opinion. The UJTA also learns that the Evaluation Committee, which was impressed by the applicant's credentials, decided unanimously to schedule his application, along with those of other applicants, for consideration by the Council.

The UJTA strongly feels that the application of Prof. Sam - Thiagalingam should be considered for the post of the Vice-Chancellor due to the following reasons:

1. Prof. Sam - Thiagalingam has mailed his application on 27th of December 2016, reasonably well ahead of the deadline, though the post was delivered a day after the deadline purely due to postal delays which is beyond his control. It is indeed our good fortune that he was made aware of the advertisement and he applied taking considerable time to prepare. His application adds significantly to our choice



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towards enhancing the quality of this University; it is incumbent upon the Council, which we are sure has this same aim in view, to do justice to the choice that is available to us.

The advertisement, under instructions to candidates, mentions that "Applications / nominations should be in a sealed cover / envelope addressed to the Secretary to the Council, Office of the Registrar, University of Jaffna, Thirunelvely, Jaffna and **either hand delivered or sent under registered cover** to reach the above office before 3.00 pm on 16th January 2017". It should be noted that the advertisement does not require the candidates to courier their application but either send it to the University by registered post or hand deliver it to the relevant authority. That Prof. Thiagalingam mailed his application well ahead of the due date shows unambiguously that he acted reasonably with good intention towards the University of Jaffna and those who are in charge of processing the applications.

2. We would like to bring to your notice that between the day on which Prof. Thiagalingam mailed his application in the USA and the day on which it was received by its recipient in Jaffna, some unforeseen events such as postal strike and airport closure occurred, which we believe, would have been the cause of the unexpected delay in the delivery of his application.

3. Rejecting Prof. Thiagalingam's application for a reason that was beyond his control would be contrary to the spirit in which the University appointed a Search Committee to seek competent applicants for this important position from all corners of the globe, and invites nominations. A closing date in applications for a highly important position like the Vice-Chancellor of a national university in the country should not be confused with the norms and practices generally observed when calls for commercial tenders are placed.

4. We note with dismay that the appointment of spouse of one of the candidates for the VC's position, to chair the Search Committee appointed by the Council amounts to a conflict of interest. The said committee, in our view, had not acted properly failing unintentionally or otherwise to use their mandate to the best of their ability



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and widen their search for the candidates with a broad and far-reaching vision for the University and the larger society that it serves.


5. Sections of the Northern public and the academic community in the country have expressed their displeasure towards rejecting Prof. Thiagalingam's application on the grounds of a fortuitous postal delay. This would leave the larger community, to which we are answerable, feeling that there is a conspiracy to deny them the quality that they long for, and is justly their due.

6. There are instances where the Attorney General's Department had advised re-selection with fresh nominations in the elections for the post of Vice-Chancellor at the public universities in Sri Lanka taking into consideration the flaws in applications and acceptance processes.

In concluding, we the members of the UJTA reiterate that the officers of the University of Jaffna and the members of the Council should consider Prof. Thiagalingam's application for the post of the Vice-Chancellor. We sincerely hope the Council Members will exercise the mandate bestowed upon them wisely, taking a broader and holistic approach and set an example to the rest of the University Councils in the country. It is only by doing so that we as members of the University community can assure the people in the North, repeatedly denied the services of persons of high intellectual and moral standing, that the future of higher education in their region is in better and safer hands.

Thank you

Yours sincerely,



 General Secretary

செயலாளர்/ Secretary
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