CONFEDERATION OF INDIAN PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES

Moving Bharat (India) Again Towards Vishwa Guru

Host University

ROUNDTABLE INTERACTION

on

Reimagining University Administration in the Age of Digital Transformation

📅 13ᵗʰ Nov 2025

📍 Assam downtown University
Guwahati, Assam

🌐 cipuglobal.org

REPORT ↗

ABOUT THE ROUNDTABLE

As part of strategic engagement initiatives, Confederation of Indian Private Universities(CIPU) organised roundtable interaction on topic **"Reimagining University Administration with the Age of Digital Transformation" on 13th November 2025 at Assam down town University, Guwahati, Assam** to foster the exchange of best practices and innovative approaches that promote institutional agility, resilience, and excellence.

This exclusive, boardroom format dialogue brought Registrars/Administrative Heads from leading institution to codeveloped actionable strategic on evolving role of senior academic/administrative leaders in an era of digital transformation.

KEY POINTS DISCUSSED

- **Capacity Building for Administrative Staff**
- **Cybersecurity and Data Privacy**
- **Improving Stakeholder Experience**
- **Digital Governance and Compliance**
- **Streamlining Academic & Administrative Workflows**

WELCOME ADDRESS

The roundtable began with a warm welcome address **by Prof. (Dr.) Narayan Chandra Talukdar**, Vice Chancellor, Assam down town University. In his welcome address, Prof. Talukdar, highlighted the university's green campus and emphasized the sector's ongoing transition from traditional administrative practices to technology-driven systems. He noted that post-pandemic digital transformation has reshaped university governance, while also cautioning against losing human and student-centric perspectives. Using admission-related examples, he outlined increasing administrative complexities-such as managing large applicant numbers, refund issues, and student grievances-which require transparent and efficient digital solutions. He further stressed that modern administration relies heavily on digital platforms, automation, and AI, demanding faster adaptation from university staff. Prof. Talukdar also referred to the national growth in higher education from a 9% to 27% gross enrolment ratio and the increase in universities across India, emphasized the importance of such discussions to strengthen academic systems. He concluded by wishing success to the deliberations and reaffirming AdtU's commitment to educational excellence.

SPECIAL ADDRESS

Mr. R. Karthik, Director General, CIPU, thanked Assam down town University for hosting CIPU's first Northeast roundtable. He briefly outlined the Confederation of Indian Private Universities' origins in 2022 and its formal launch in 2023 to strengthening the voice, visibility, and value of private universities in India. Now comprising nearly 100+ private universities, CIPU operates through national and regional councils and specialised working groups. Mr. Karthik highlighted key initiatives, including industry-academia collaboration, internationalisation efforts, global partnerships and a dedicated CSR engagement forum. He also referenced platforms like Voices of University Governance, monthly newsletters, and knowledge-sharing activities that enhance member participation. He reaffirmed CIPU's role as a membership-driven body committed to advancing the higher education ecosystem and outlined the inclusive structure of the roundtable discussions.

OPENING REMARKS AND CONTEXT SETTING

Prof. (Dr.) D. P. Agarwal, Distinguished Member, CIPU Board of Advisors & Former Chairman, UPSC noted that with the flexibility offered under the National Education Policy (NEP), private universities should make greater use of SWAYAM and other MOOC platforms to diversify learning opportunities for students. He emphasized the need for standardized ERP systems, noting that most platforms merely digitize existing processes. He suggested that CIPU undertake a comprehensive evaluation of available ERPs and recommend suitable options for private universities, along with minor customizations. He also urged that government-supported digital tools be extended to private institutions, while ensuring that technology does not diminish the human connection in teaching.

ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION

The roundtable discussion commenced under the chairpersonship of **Dr. D. P. Agarwal** and the moderation of **Dr. M. K. Modi**, Executive Dean, Assam down town University. Dr. M. K. Modi highlighted the growing complexity of university administration and emphasized that digital technology has become essential. While most institutions have adopted ERP, LMS, and digital examination systems, he noted that current efforts largely replicate traditional processes rather than redesigning them. He stressed the need to build university administration systems "from the bottom up" using advanced tools such as big data and artificial intelligence to generate deeper insights and improve effectiveness. Dr. Modi pointed out that universities currently use mixed models-some fully digital and others partially reliant on pen-and-paper workflows-yet still follow traditional frameworks. He identified a major challenge in managing continuous data submissions to regulatory bodies like NAAC, NBA, and NIRF, stressing the importance of data integrity and unified systems to avoid inconsistencies. He concluded by urging stakeholders to contribute their suggestions for developing a more holistic, robust, and future-ready administrative system.

After the discussion and exchange of views among the dignitaries, the Moderator presented the consolidated gist of the deliberations before the Chairperson of the Committee. During this summary, the Moderator highlighted key insights emerging from the earlier round of discussion. It was noted that although most universities have adopted ERP platforms, these systems largely replicate traditional administrative processes in digital form. There is, therefore, significant scope to redesign university administration by leveraging the full potential of digital technologies through a more integrated and future-oriented system. The discussion also emphasized the rapid development of the government-driven SAMARTH ERP. While it faced initial challenges, SAMARTH has now matured and is widely accepted across government universities. Although private universities are not yet mandated to adopt it, the possibility remains open. Hence, it is important for institutions to maintain their data in a format that can be easily migrated to SAMARTH, should the need arise. A further point raised concerned the wide range of software tools subscribed to by universities-such as plagiarism detection systems, learning management platforms, and research support services. Government institutions benefit from national-level consortia, such as Turnitin agreements and the One Nation One Subscription initiative, which allow for collective bargaining and reduced pricing for private Universities.

KEY SUGGESTIONS AND TAKEAWAYS

The roundtable brought forth several actionable insights and recommendations aimed at strengthening digital governance, enhancing stakeholder experience, and improving academic–administrative efficiency across private universities. The following section consolidates the key suggestions emerging from the insightful discussion.

Capacity Building for Administrative Staff

Participants emphasized the need for continuous upskilling of administrative personnel to effectively operate within modern digital ecosystems. Universities must invest in structured training on ERP, LMS, data analytics, and AI-enabled tools. A bottom-up approach to system strengthening was recommended, ensuring that staff are fully aware of data flows, compliance requirements, and the operational nuances of digital platforms. Regular workshops and hands-on training modules were suggested to reduce dependence on manual administrative processes.

Cybersecurity and Data Privacy

Concerns regarding data security and privacy were prominent throughout the discussion. Delegates underscored the importance of maintaining **single-source data repositories** that ensure accuracy, integrity, and reduced duplication. Universities must adopt robust cybersecurity protocols and ensure compliance with emerging data protection frameworks. The committee also noted the increasing relevance of the government-driven **SAMARTH ERP**, recommending that private institutions maintain data structures that allow seamless migration, should the platform become mandatory in the future.

Improving Stakeholder Experience

Several recommendations focused on enhancing the overall experience of students, faculty, staff, and parents. A modern grievance-management system capable of accepting **voice-based submissions**, including vernacular language inputs with automated translation, was strongly encouraged. Such systems can support timely triaging and prioritization of concerns. The need to balance technological adoption with human interaction was reiterated; while digital pedagogy-such as flipped classrooms, short video content, shared reading materials, and continuous assessment-improves engagement, mentoring and personalized guidance remain indispensable. Care was advised to avoid overwhelming parents with excessive communication and instead cultivate strong, supportive teacher–student relationships.

Digital Governance and Compliance

Delegates acknowledged that while most universities have adopted ERP systems, these platforms often mirror traditional administrative processes. The roundtable highlighted the need to **redesign governance frameworks** to fully leverage digital capabilities, including predictive analytics, automated reporting, and integrated compliance workflows. The potential of forming **consortia led by CIPU** was discussed, allowing private universities to collectively negotiate access to essential digital tools such as plagiarism checkers, LMS platforms, and research databases-mirroring the benefits available to government institutions under ONOS and other national initiatives. Increased utilization of **SWAYAM and MOOC platforms**, in alignment with NEP recommendations, was strongly encouraged.

Streamlining Academic and Administrative Workflows

The discussion underscored the importance of adopting a holistic, integrated approach to academic and administrative workflows. Universities were advised to phase out hybrid models involving both digital and paper-based processes and transition toward fully integrated digital systems. Efficient ERP usage, backed by accurate data entry and standardized processes, was identified as key to improving transparency and operational efficiency. Participants recommended reducing non-teaching duties for faculty by employing trained administrative staff for data-intensive tasks. Annual curriculum reviews, meaningful library-based assignments, and judicious use of plagiarism detection tools were also emphasized as critical for academic quality enhancement.

CONCLUDING REMARKS AND VOTE OF THANKS

The session concluded with thoughtful remarks and a formal vote of thanks by **Dr. Nitul Jyoti Das**, Deputy Registrar (Academics), reaffirming the university's dedication to advancing innovation and inclusivity in higher education.

CONTACT ↗

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