Despite hurdles and problems, JSMU has not only survived but made commendable progress since its inception in 2012.

Plans are ready for ISO certification, establishment of dental college, Clinical Trials Unit while Diagnostic Lab will start functioning within six months.

SMC Alumni of North America has made tremendous financial contributions to their Alma Matter.

KARACHI: Jinnah Sindh Medical University (JSMU) did not have a normal birth. In fact it was after Dow University of Health Sciences went through a C. Section that it gave birth to two new medical universities i.e. upgradation of Sindh Medical College to a University and establishment of Benazir Bhutto Medical University at Layari General Hospital. When former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto visited United States, she promised to the SMC Alumni of North America that when their government comes, it will upgrade SMC to a university. Mr. Asif Zardari was also present on that occasion. Hence, when the time came, President Asif Ali Zardari fulfilled that promise made with the SMC Alumni of North America. It was his personal interest that despite lot of opposition, he signed the Charter for Sindh Medical University at a meeting held at Bilawal House and not at the Governor House Karachi.
This university had to face lot of hurdles and problems from the very first day of its inception but despite all that it has not only survived but managed to make commendable progress over the past three years. First this university was established through an Ordinance but the bill could not be passed by the Sindh Assembly in time and this ordinance got lapsed. The JPMC staff was also unhappy because they felt that it was their right to get a university status rather than SMC, hence to remove their grievances, the name of the university was once again changed to Jinnah Sindh Medical University. Even otherwise the government had refused to give university status to JPMC saying that if they wish to become a university, first they have to establish a medical college and only then it can be upgraded to a university. No hospital can be made a university. A medical college could not be established at JPMC and this issue continued to linger on. When the SMC was finally given the status of a university, JPMC senior faculty members went to the court stating that they wished to remain with the federal government. However, after the 18th constitutional amendment wherein health was given to the provinces, it became further difficult. Hearing in the JPMC faculty case has completed, both the parties have given their arguments and now the court has to announce its decision which is expected any moment. However, this litigation has adversely affected the teaching, training and patient care at the JPMC. After the retirement of numerous professors, since there was no faculty, many departments have been closed, some are functioning with bare minimum junior staff. Some of the units do not have a Professor or Associate Professor because neither any new inductions could be made nor any one was promoted. Many people are waiting for their promotion which is long overdue.

The JSMU was formally established on June 1st 2012 and Prof. Tariq Rafi, Prof. of ENT at JPMC was appointed as its founder Vice Chancellor who assumed his new responsibilities on June 29th 2012. In an exclusive interview with Pulse International recently, Prof. Tariq Rafi highlighted the achievements and accomplishments so far and also talked about the future development plans of Jinnah Sindh Medical University. The current enrollment in Sindh Medical College, he said, was three hundred fifty and we have inducted forty five new faculty and staff members particularly in the basic medical sciences. Except Forensic Medicine where we do not have a Professor, all the basic medical sciences departments are well equipped and adequately staffed, he added. Problems with the clinical faculty remain and once the court verdict is announced in the JPMC faculty case, we will be able to make fresh appointments. Prof. Tariq Rafi opined that it was unfortunate that there was some misunderstanding in the senior faculty members of JPMC. All the professors are members of the Senate of the University. Not only that, Associate, Assistant Professors and junior faculty also get representation in the Senate. In any case they would have been in overwhelming majority in the Senate to run and manage the university the way they liked. At present JPMC has a bed strength of 1600 but there are only fifty six Medical Officers. How it is possible to efficiently run such a big tertiary healthcare facility with such a meager number of Medical Officers when they also have to do night duty and attend emergencies. This has certainly affected the quality of patient care. Not only that, when there are no trainers, supervisors, how the postgraduates can be trained, he remarked. Now the provincial assembly has passed a bill making JPMC and National Institute of Child Health (NICH) as its constituent institutions with the result that the administration of these two institutions will also come under the administrative control of the JSMU. At present the following medical and dental institutions are affiliated with Jinnah Sindh Medical University:

1. Sindh Medical College
2. Jinnah Medical and Dental College
3. United Medical & Dental College
4. Altamash Institute of Dental Medicine
5. Fatima Jinnah Dental College
6. Liaquat National Hospital & Medical College
7. Sir Syed College of Medical Sciences for Girls
8. Liaquat College of Medicine and Dentistry

Plans are afoot to establish the JSMU Dental College. Faculty was selected after detailed interview by a committee and now we are issuing them offer letters to come and join us. Equipment has also been acquired while some more is being arranged. Once we are through this process, we will ask the Pakistan Medical & Dental College to send a team for inspection and then this dental college will be established after getting necessary permission.

Replying to a question regarding the financial assistance provided by Sindh Medical College Alumni Association of North America, Prof. Tariq Rafi was full of praise for them. The Alumni with the assistance and collaboration of APPNA provided us US$ 86,000/- which enabled us to establish APPNA Institute of Public Health currently headed by Prof. Lubna Baig. They also provided us US$ 80,000/- for the renovation of two lecture halls while the third lecture hall is now being renovated with a further assistance of US$ 40,000/- This is not all, they also provided us US$ 25,000/- for purchase of books for the library besides giving us US$ 10,000/- every year for providing scholarships to the needy students. University itself has earmarked Rupees one Crore for offering scholarships to the students as well. These scholarships are of two types. First it is on merit and those students who secure First, Second and Third position, their tuition fee is waived off. Secondly those who cannot afford tuition fee, they are also provided financial assistance upto Rs. 50,000/- for a year. We have also got some arrangements whereby some philanthropists also help us with the result that no student who once gets enrolled in the university, is forced to discontinue his/her studies and we try to help them through different ways.

Replying to another question Prof. Tariq Rafi said that JSMU syndicate has seventeen members while the strength of University Senate is over forty. All professors and representatives of various categories of teachers have their representation on the senate. In addition PM&DC, HEC have their representatives in the Senate. Moreover all the affiliated medical and dental colleges also have a representation in the Senate. At present the total staff of the university was one hundred seventy including eleven professors. As soon as the court case is decided, the vacant positions in the clinical faculty will be filled up immediately. So far we could not start any postgraduate programme in basic sciences despite the fact that we have qualified and experienced staff, because BMSI at JPMC is a well established unit and we would like to further strengthen and promote that instead of having a parallel basic medical sciences unit, if the JPMC becomes a constituent institution of the university after the court decision.

Asked about the teaching and training facilities currently available at JSMU Prof. Tariq Rafi said that we have five lecture halls each having a seating capacity for 350 students. We have two auditoriums. We avail the facility of APPNA lecture series which is arranged from 8.00 AM to 9.00 AM on first Monday of every month. These are mostly on clinical subjects and the presentation from an expert in a particular discipline of medicine is followed by interactive question-answer session. It is extremely helpful to update the knowledge of our clinicians. We are preparing for ISO Certification; JSMU Dental College will be established soon. A modern state of the art diagnostic service offering all the investigations besides imaging facilities of CT and MRI will be available within six months. Hopefully we will be able to generate some funding for the university from this project. Despite the fact that we had to face lot of problems, we have
accomplished a lot during the last three years. Our annual budget is Rs. 450 Million. Sindh Government gives us Rs. 250 Million and the rest we generate from our own resources. Answering another question Prof. Tariq Rafi said that so far HEC has not given us any financial assistance. According to their rules, they do not give any financial assistance during the first three years when the universities have to survive at their own. After three years they give grant to various universities. We are now hopeful that from the next year we will get some financial grant from the Higher Education Commission as well, he added. Ever since its inception in 1973, Sindh Medical College has so far produced 10,500 graduates, he stated.

Responding to yet another question Prof. Tariq Rafi said that so far we have established the following new institutions and departments:

1. APPNA Institute of Public Health
2. Institute of Pharmacy
3. Institute of Health Business Management
4. Institute of Medical Technology
5. Professional Development Center
6. Department of Medical Education
7. Research Department
8. Admission Cell
9. Examination Department,
10. MCQ Bank
11. Clinical coordination cell
12. Quality Enhancement Cell
13. Power Lab
14. Digital Library for continuous assessment and online examination
15. Administration department
16. Finance Department
17. Information Technology Dept.
18. Audit Department
19. Planning and Development Dept.
20. Students Affairs Dept.
22. Legal Cell

Board of Studies, Academic Council and Syndicate of the university has been constituted and they are functioning. University is recognized by HEC. Institutional Review Board headed by Dr. Asim has been constituted. We are implementing integrated modular curriculum, we have introduced Learning Management System, established Endowment Fund and publication of the university journal i.e. Annals of Jinnah Sindh Medical University has started. We have also signed an MOU with Board of Trustees of the University of Illinois, USA for faculty development, consultations, exchange of faculty and students, to have joint educational programmes besides preparation of academic materials. The most important fact which makes JSMU different from other institutions is that we select people on merit through a high powered selection committee and then give them free hand following modern scientific principles of management. They enjoy complete academic autonomy to plan and executive various projects, we give them due respect and autonomy and this encourages them to give their best. There is no un-necessary interference in their working and they enjoy complete freedom, Prof. Tariq Rafi concluded.