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Role reversal: Officials, teachers of Jadavpur University on dharna against students

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KOLKATA: Jadavpur University on Thursday witnessed an unusual scene. Instead of students venting their grievances or raising campus issues, it was the acting vice-chancellor, registrar, other officials and several professors, who sat outside Aurobindo Bhavan to protest against the "unjustified demands of a section of hostel boarders" and their abusive and unruly behaviour when executive council meeting was underway on Wednesday.

The VC and administrative officials' demonstration was withdrawn around 7pm following requests from teachers, non-teaching staff and other officials, who promised to cooperate with them.

Among the agitating boarders were residents of A2 Block of Main Hostel, whose names have been recommended for punishment by the university's internal panel probing the death of a first-year student in August.

The student's death and consequent focus on ragging on the campus and at hostels had prompted JU authorities to exclude hostel representation from hostel interview panel as many had pointed at irregularities in berth allotment and questioned the participation of senior students in the process. But boarders opposed this exclusion, calling it "undemocratic". They demanded that representatives from 15 hostel blocks be included in administrative and policymaking bodies, such as EC, anti-ragging committee and squad and students' welfare

board, so that their opinions were consulted before taking decision regarding hostels, like batch-wise segregation, reallocation and construction of separate buildings.

"Under pressure we accepted their demand of including hostel representatives in the hostel interview panel. Their demand of including hostel representatives in students' welfare board, anti-ragging committee & squad were not accepted in the absence of statutory provisions," said acting VC Buddhadeb Sau. He added the expression and behaviour of some of the agitating boarders prompted them to stage the dharna outside the Aurobindo Bhavan.