

# 2<sup>nd</sup> CONVOCAATION

August 11, 2013

## Directors Report

Prof Sudhir K. Jain



भारतीय प्रौद्योगिकी संस्थान गाँधीनगर  
Indian Institute of Technology Gandhinagar



**Prof Sudhir K Jain**  
Director, IIT Gandhinagar

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Honourable Chairman, Board of Governors of Indian Institute of Technology Gandhinagar, Dr Baldev Raj, Distinguished Chief Guest, Honourable Dr Anil Kakodkar, Former Chairman Atomic Energy Commission and Secretary, Department of Atomic Energy, Members of the Board of Governors, Members of the Senate, Faculty and Staff Members of the Institute, Invited Dignitaries and Guests, Graduating Students and their Families, Members of the Press and Electronic Media, Ladies and Gentlemen: I extend the most cordial and hearty welcome to each one of you on the occasion of the second convocation of the Institute.

I am particularly happy to welcome Dr Anil Kakodkar, who has played a key role in establishment of this Institute in his capacity as Chairman of the Board of Governors of IIT Bombay. Under his visionary leadership, IIT Bombay had laid a very strong foundation of IITGN by the time I joined this Institute. In the early days, before our own Board was constituted, I had an opportunity to work with him closely and I very much cherish my association with him. He continues to display tremendous affection and support for this Institute over the years and his presence here is always inspiring and energizing. We are immensely grateful to you, Dr Kakodkar, for accepting our invitation, and we are honoured by your gracious presence in our midst today.

Today's convocation is unique in one respect – besides our second graduating batch of BTech, the first post graduating batch (MTech) of the Institute is receiving degrees. In the next 15-20 minutes let me present brief highlights of the Institute since the last convocation.

IIT Gandhinagar has just completed five years of existence and on August 2 this year we celebrated its sixth birthday. While the first three years may be considered as the years of formation of IIT Gandhinagar, the last couple of years were the years of consolidation. The Institute is developing at a very rapid and frenetic pace, thanks to the tremendous energy and vitality of our young faculty, staff and students. Numerous visitors speak of the urgency they smell in the air, and the enthusiasm they experience in the community.

We took possession of the land for our permanent campus in July last year and through a very innovative, collaborative and consultative process, developed our construction plans. Within a year of acquiring the land, we awarded three major construction contracts: apartments, hostels and academic buildings. This has been possible due to the tremendous commitment and hard work of our consultants, and the engineering team of CPWD and IITGN. We expect to build a unique campus that will encourage interaction and require minimal energy consumption and maintenance.

During the past five years, the Institute made tremendous progress and we can take rightful pride in:

- Innovations in curricula, both BTech and MTech, and the education IITGN provides to its students.

- Innovations in faculty recruitment and governance.
- Disciplinary diversity, including integration of the humanities and social sciences within the overall academic culture of the Institute.
- Philanthropic fund raising and its innovative application in promoting excellence.

We are particularly proud of our unique BTech and MTech curricula and I am happy to report that the Institute received the World Education Award 2013 for its innovative BTech programme at the World Education Summit in New Delhi, April 23, 2013. This summit was organized by AICTE, NCERT, UNESCO, and Elets Technomedia.

This year, we launched 4-year BTech in Civil Engineering, and 2-year MSc programmes in Chemistry, Mathematics and Cognitive Sciences. We plan to launch 4-year BTech in Materials Science and Engineering, 2-year MSc in Physics and 2-year MA in Society and Culture next year. Peer-Assisted Learning (PAL) was launched in October 2012 to support first year students having difficulty with English as the medium of instruction.

During the summer of 2013, nearly 148 of our undergraduate students (more than 30% of all UGs) undertook internships in universities, research institutes, and industries. Of these, 27 students interned at overseas universities such as Caltech, Duke, Syracuse, Washington and Notre Dame.

The extraordinary educational opportunities that the Institute provides to its students can be gauged from the fact that, of the BTech students graduating today, more than one-third have received international educational experience through participation in overseas internships, conferences or other academic visits. In fact, some availed three or four such opportunities during their four years at IITGN. Three of the graduating students today, Ekta Prashnani, Adit Gupta and Tarkeshwar Singh, have filed patents based on their summer internships and a number of other undergraduates have scientific publications to their credit.

Our efforts to attract the very best post-graduate students to the Institute are also yielding extra-ordinary successes: this year, we received more than 8,000 applications for PhD and more than 19,000 applications for MTech admissions. As a result, our post-graduate admissions this year were almost four times more competitive than BTech admissions through the JEE.

The Institute places great emphasis on research at all levels, ranging from undergraduates to faculty, and some of our focal areas in research have now started to emerge. During the past year, our Board of Governors approved the establishment of four Centres in Safety, Design and Innovation, Biomedical Engineering, and Archaeological Sciences. The Underwriters Laboratories (UL) stepped forward to support the Safety Centre; Ricoh Company Ltd is supporting the Design and Innovation Centre, and the Biomedical Engineering

Centre is being supported by the Government of Gujarat. A major international conference on Safety was organized by the Institute during the year, enabling us to host numerous eminent experts from India and overseas and to develop collaborations.

Several brain-storming workshops enabled us to develop our vision and the road map for disciplines such as Archaeological Sciences, Earth Sciences, Cognitive Science, Public Health, Humanities and Social Sciences in Engineering Education, Design and Innovation, and Biomedical Engineering.

The breadth of research focus has percolated to our undergraduates, 152 of whom participated in this year's research contest sponsored by Underwriters Laboratories (UL), to develop an electrical vehicle platform with the aim of better understanding safety challenges for electrical vehicles in Indian conditions. 15 students participated in a design competition we organized in collaboration with the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation on how to make Ahmedabad a litter-free city. The winners of this competition were Adit Gupta Mohak Patel, and Tarkeshwar Singh. Nearly 30 students from 20 different institutions, in addition to 60 IITGN undergraduates carried out research at the institute this summer under the Summer Research Internship Programme (SRIP).

The Institute faculty are attracting significant external funds in the form of sponsored research and consulting projects. With only 56 career faculty in the Institute, we currently have 35 ongoing sponsored

research projects. During the past one year, 16 major sponsored research projects with total funding of nearly Rs. 5.5 crores and another 10 consultancy projects valued at about Rs. 1.3 were sanctioned.

The Institute established an Incubation Centre, which is presently incubating GridAnts, a start-up company launched by four graduates of our Pioneer Batch, Mr Sarthak Jain, Mr Prathamesh Juvatkar, Mr Prashant Borde, and Mr G Nithin Kumar.

Building strong relationships with the external world, including universities in India and overseas, is an important agenda for the Institute. Several such partnerships have now become vibrant and active, including those with California Institute of Technology (Caltech); Underwriters Laboratories, Chicago; Ricoh Company Ltd, Japan; University of Washington, Seattle, USA; Washington University, St. Louis, USA; University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, Canada, etc.

A significant element of IITGN's agenda of excellence depends on the availability of substantial philanthropic funds and the Institute has been singularly fortunate in this respect as well. We not only continue to enjoy the confidence of our earlier donors, but have also added new donors this year, including Prof A V Anilkumar and Sri Ukabhai Solanki. Besides, three corporations have contributed significant discretionary funds; these are Gujarat Mineral Development Corporation, Underwriters Laboratories, and Ricoh Company Ltd.



The faculty is the backbone of any research university, and if there is one thing that truly amazes our well wishers about the Institute, it is the quality and commitment of our faculty and our staff. During the year, we recruited exceptional faculty candidates in diverse disciplines, including some at the mid-career level. In addition, we had a significant number of distinguished academics from around the world join us as Visiting Professors, or as Scholars-in-Residence. Today the Institute has nearly 75 faculty, of which 56 are career faculty.

Our colleagues received a number of awards and honours, of which I will mention only a few: Dr Sudhanshu Sharma and Dr Sivapriya Kirubakaran have been awarded the Ramanujan Fellowship, and Dr Nithin V George received the Inspire Faculty Award from the Department of Science & Technology. Dr Uttama Lahiri was awarded the Dr C V Raman Young Teachers' Excellence Award for 2012.

The Institute has set up several excellence awards for faculty and students. Dr Amit Prashant was selected for Excellence Award in Institution Building for the year 2012. Staff excellence awards for 2012 were handed over by Shri Azim Premji during his visit to the Institute in December 2012 to Shri Pijush Majumdar (Assistant Registrar), Shri Sanjeev Kumar Pandey (Junior Accounts Officer), Shri Ankur K. Navdiwala (Junior Lab Assistant) and Shri Bhikabhai Patel (Junior Lab Attendant).

Our students are actively engaged in numerous activities outside the classroom as well. Amalthea, the annual technical summit this year focused on Safety and on Automobile Engineering. Our cultural festival, Blithchron, was attended by a record 19,000 visitors. We hosted Avant Garde, a visual imagery conference cum workshop on photography and cinematography. The 2013 edition of our 10-day all-night intra-institute sport event Halla Bol fielded 400 matches involving 2,400 participants.

Our students performed exceedingly well this year winning prizes and in sports events. Just to mention the prominent ones: Rounak Mehta and Akshay Randad, both from 2<sup>nd</sup> year mechanical engineering, have been selected for the GE Foundation Scholar Leaders Program and will receive a scholarship amount of \$2,250 each for the next two years.

At the 48<sup>th</sup> Inter-IIT Aquatic Meet 2012-13, Parth Sane Vishwas defended his 2011-12 50m Butterfly event title and won a gold medal; he won silver medals in 100m back stroke and 100m free style, and a bronze medal in 50m free style. Animesh Kumawat won silver medals in 400m free style and 1500m free style, and bronze medals in 200m free style and 200m back stroke. The IITGN team secured 4<sup>th</sup> rank among 13 participating IITs. At the 48<sup>th</sup> Inter IIT Sports Meet 2012, Shivani Rani won gold medal in Discus Throw (Women) event with a new Inter IIT Sports Meet Record. She also won a Silver medal in Javeline Throw.

We continue to excel in the placement records of our students. Of the graduating batch of 104 BTech students, 17 are planning higher studies: 11 to US universities, such as Carnegie Mellon, Brown, and Texas at Austin, while six will study within India in institutions such as IITs, IIMs, NID and TISS. Numerous reputed companies, such as Ricoh Innovations, National Instruments, Honda, Volvo-Eicher, Grasim, ONGC, Flipkart, Timetooth, Infosys, Cognizant, Texas Instruments, and DRDO, recruited our students through campus placements.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Proud as we are of where we stand today, we are equally mindful that much remains to be done to achieve our ambition of becoming one of the top-rated universities in the world. We must:

- ramp up our research infrastructure and research output;
- scale up our philanthropic fund raising and develop a large endowment fund;
- firmly embed our culture of excellence, research and scholarship, and our core values of impeccable integrity in all aspects of Institute management;
- Develop leadership that will sustain the current momentum for decades ahead; and
- Internationalize the Institute.

Few people get the opportunity of getting to build a new university, and therefore, every stakeholder of IITGN carries with him or her a great responsibility to do things just right, to ensure that future

generations of students and academics get truly top-class education and research opportunities, and to ensure that IITGN becomes a fountainhead of solutions for the challenges facing society. India deserves a great university with an international stature, akin to that Nalanda and Taxila held many centuries earlier, and IITGN aspires to be that great Indian university of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Our country, where a sizable population is deprived of the basic necessities of life, cannot afford aspirations that are any lower nor if our actions fail to live up to those lofty expectations.

#### My Dear Graduating Students:

I extend my heartiest congratulations to the graduating BTech class of 2013 and the first batch of MTech students, and all those students who have won medals and awards today. I also congratulate your parents who silently sacrificed so that you could succeed in your endeavours. Years of patience, support and the love of your parents and families have contributed immensely to your success today.

Some of you no doubt came to IIT Gandhinagar with regret in your heart for not being able to make it to an “old IIT.” Today you graduate with tremendous satisfaction that you came here, that you got to do things that you may not have done elsewhere, and that you experienced the tremendous warmth and affection of the entire IITGN community. But, equally importantly, you became an important player and a participant in taking this “one of the new IITs”

toward the goal of the “most innovative IIT,” in this historical journey of IITGN's pursuit of becoming a “great university.”

Just like you, I too came to the Institute with dreams in my eyes, along with certain fears, apprehensions, and skepticism. After all, the creation of “eight new IITs” at one stroke was an unprecedented event in the country and we had no idea where it may lead us. Soon, both you and I gained confidence and started to work with “moving targets” and today we look back with wonder and surprise: wow, did we ever imagine that IITGN could become what it has become? I am sure that many years down the line, you will look back on your time at IITGN as one full of growth, learning, excitement and adventure.

I admire you for your great accomplishments during your time at the IITGN. You are destined to bring cheer, hope, and joy to millions of our countrymen who invested huge resources for your education in the expectation that you will contribute to the solutions to India's seemingly intractable problems. I, on my own personal behalf, and on behalf of all your teachers and fellow students, wish you the very best in your endeavours. We shall relish and enjoy your successes and accomplishments in life.

While you move out to the big world awaiting you outside the Institute, do not forget our joint historical mission: to create a great university that all of us can be proud of in the years ahead. Do not forget that you have the greatest possible stake in the future of this

Institute since you will always be known as a graduate of this Institute, and that your “alma mater” expects you to nurture it and support it in the years ahead and as you grow.

You get only one life to live and it does not have a rewind button. I wish you the courage and the wisdom to handle life as it unfolds for you.

God Bless You

Thank you ladies and gentlemen and Jai Hind.





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