



Dear well-wishers of IIT Gandhinagar,

Welcome to the fifth edition of our annual update letter.

Much as it upended life globally, the ongoing pandemic has defined and shaped many institutional developments during the past year. The IITGN community has risen to the occasion and displayed extraordinary leadership, empathy and engagement that has enabled us not just to overcome the pressing challenges it posed, but to reinvent, innovate and grow in ways that will endure and make us better and stronger.

Safety First

The newly-constituted Crisis Management Group, the Special Volunteer Force and the Covid-19 Medical Response Team, as well as the entire community have played critical and invaluable roles in ensuring a safe campus and managing and supporting each other during this crisis.

The Institute received exceptional support from state and local authorities. The state government facilitated Rapid Antigen Testing of over 2700 members of the community in October 2020 and the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation helped us establish a special arrangement with three major hospitals in Ahmedabad to reserve 30 beds for COVID patients from IITGN.



New Pedagogy for the New Normal

The Dean (Student Affairs) and Dean (Academic Affairs) and their teams have worked diligently to engage with students, keep them safe, and provide them with exceptional financial support and educational experiences. When the pandemic disrupted our regular semester in March, we advanced the summer term and ran a few courses online in experimental mode to gain experience with online teaching. We also strengthened our IT and classroom infrastructure and introduced an emergency grading system for the disrupted term. We were **the first IIT to hold a virtual Annual Convocation**. Notably, the number of PhDs awarded at this year's Convocation more than doubled from last year, signaling the rising development of our research ecosystem.

The first term for the new batch of UG students started only on Nov 12 due to the delayed JEE Advanced test. The six-week term had courses on Computing, Writing, Learning How to Learn, and **a Foundation Programme reimagined for the online setting**. The introductory term is designed to aid incoming students in adapting to their new environment and help align their academic schedule with other batches starting in January.

The IITGN community has risen to the occasion and displayed **extraordinary leadership, empathy and engagement** that has enabled us not just to overcome. For instance, nine overseas faculty members (from USA, Mexico, Brazil, Portugal, Germany, and Japan) taught online courses last semester.

Research

IITGN is committed to building the best research environment and developing outstanding research facilities. With the next set of academic buildings, presently under construction, we expect to significantly scale up our experimental facilities. **The Research Park is nearing completion** and will lead to unprecedented opportunities for industry partnerships. The Department of Science and Technology sanctioned the establishment of a Nidhi-Prayas Centre to support young innovators turn their ideas into proofs-of-concept at the Innovation and Entrepreneurship Centre (IIEC).



Partnerships and New Talent

We are grateful for the generosity of major donors who supported several new initiatives during the year. Shri Gordhanbhai B Gelot established the **Kankuben Bakshirambhai Gelot Chair** in memory of his late mother as well as the **Gordhanbhai B Gelot Laboratory for Artificial Intelligence and Data Science**. Dr. Dinesh O Shah has endowed the **Dr. Dinesh O Shah Chair**. Dr. Hemant Kanakia and the Maker Bhavan Foundation helped establish the **Kanakia Young Researcher Seminar Series** at the Institute.

With the help of the IITGN Foundation in the United States, we raised nearly Rs 1.4 crores in **Empathy Funds** to benefit students and community members severely affected by the pandemic. The support enabled the Institute to provide liberal aid to 160 financially impacted students, including grants for the purchase of laptops, and tuition fee waivers.

IITGN alumni have demonstrated extraordinary affection and during the most recent financial year **more than 50% contributed to the Institute**, an exceptionally high gifting rate at any institute globally and especially noteworthy considering how recently they graduated from the Institute. **Five more alumni have endowed Rs 1 lakh annual scholarships** for undergraduate students. The scale of alumni engagement is a strong testament to the value they place on their IITGN experience.

Faculty recruitment continues vigorously at IITGN and we introduced the **Early Career Fellowship** and **50-50 Scheme** to recruit high-caliber post-doctoral researchers. We established the **Sabarmati Bridge Fellowship** to absorb aspiring researchers among our final year students whose higher study plans were disrupted by the pandemic. We anticipate that online student and faculty recruitment will become a larger component of our strategy in the coming years, opening up new avenues and talent for the continued growth of IITGN.



Campus Development

Constructions of our **guest house and the Central Arcade are now complete**. The bank has already established operations in the Central Arcade. Two new hostels were commissioned during the year and **a state-of-the-art sports complex is nearing completion**. Rang Manch, the open-air theatre, is undergoing final landscaping and is ready for public events as soon as they become possible again.

Outreach and Social Impact

We are especially proud of the collective response and support for the most vulnerable members of our community and neighboring villages. The **Shramik Kalyan Samiti** collaborated with CPWD to ensure the health, safety and well-being of construction workers during the pandemic. The **Padosi Gaam Sahayog Samiti** strengthened our relationship with the neighbouring villages by organising distribution of rations and safety-related supplies.

The Centre for Creative Learning (CCL), in collaboration with CBSE and IISER Pune, launched an online education programme **30-30 STEM** to bring out the joy and inherent beauty in the curriculum that is all around us. The **program served over 4 lakh registered participants**, recording over 3 million total views. The Centre also conducted two online sessions on **The Joy of Engineering** for first year students of nearly 150 engineering colleges affiliated with the APJ Abdul Kalam (Kerala) Technological University.

The Spirit of IITGN

The world is experiencing extraordinary turmoil, but the community's remarkable response to this crisis throughout this year is powerful evidence of IITGN's outstanding ethos and culture. As we emerge from the shadows of the Covid-19 pandemic that has so preoccupied and altered life over the past several months, we feel tested, but also empowered by the lessons and learnings forced upon us and look ahead with renewed hope and optimism to new beginnings in the upcoming year.

With best wishes,


Sudhin K Jain

