



Dear well-wishers of IIT Gandhinagar,

Welcome to the sixth edition of our annual update letter.

While this year began with a devastating second wave of COVID, it was also one of hope and rebuilding. Our campus provides a safe environment as **almost all community members have been vaccinated**. Most of our students are back on campus. While our default plan for the new year remains focused on restoring to normal, we remain prepared to face any unexpected turn of events as well.

The Second Wave

During the second wave, the Institute converted its newly constructed guest house into an isolation-cum-COVID Care Facility to treat COVID positive community members with mild to moderate symptoms. Based on the defining institutional principles of inclusivity and empathy, **the facility provided isolation and health support to the entire IITGN community**, including students, project staff, faculty, admin staff, contractual workers such as drivers, mess staff, housekeeping staff, gardeners, security personnel, and their family members. More than 240 COVID patients, including 121 students, were treated at the facility, with a peak of 95 in mid-April.

The facility provided basic medical services, such as temperature and oxygen readings, advice from doctors and nurses, medicines, RT-PCR tests, nutritious meals, as well as hard-to-access health services such as oxygen concentrators and cylinders. Institute medical staff and ambulance services were available 24x7. The facility also helped patients find beds in local hospitals when needed. Moreover, counselling services offered psychological support to patients, medical staff, and their families. **The Institute released a [widely-cited Whitepaper](#) outlining its experience and lessons** from the development and management of a community COVID Care Facility on the campus.

More recently, the institute has started medical camps at the construction workers' colonies, which are held on a weekly and rotational basis. Every camp serves 40-50 workers and their family members.

Academics

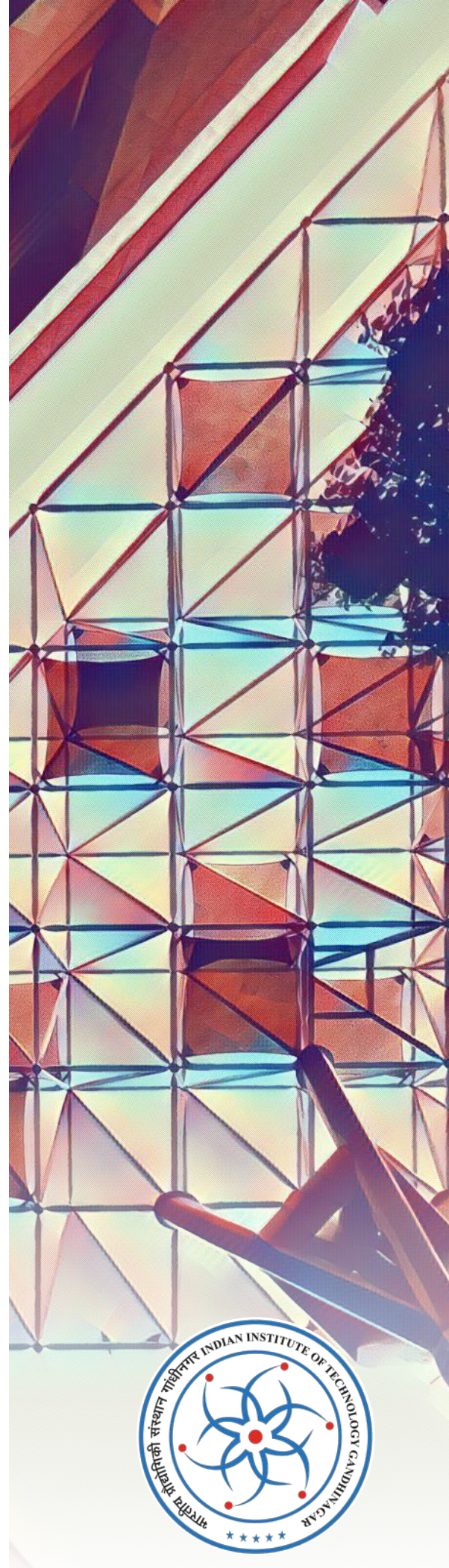
The Director's PhD Fellowship was initiated this year with the aim of encouraging the best students at the Institute to join the PhD programme immediately after completing their BTech/MSc/MA/MTech degrees. **Eleven PhD scholars from the Institute were selected for the prestigious Prime Minister's Research Fellowship (PMRF) scheme in the May 2021 cycle.** The Institute currently has 21 PMRF scheme fellows. The undergraduate admissions in the IITs happen through JEE Advanced, with minor exceptions. This year, the institute created supernumerary seats in our undergraduate programme for top performers in four Olympiads (namely, in Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, and Informatics) to broaden the pool of talented students at IITGN.

Our faculty members continued to develop innovative methods of teaching even amidst the severe constraints imposed by the pandemic. Glimpses of our attempts at a remote learning experience that is at par or even better than the classrooms can be found in [this series of Teaching Innovation videos](#) by our faculty members.

Support

We continue to actively engage with our well-wishers for raising philanthropic funds. Late Shri Gordhanbhai B Gelot has established the **Sarita G Gelot Endowment Fund** in honour of his wife to encourage and support excellence in research and education among IITGN students and faculty. In appreciation of his generosity, the Institute has named one of its research laboratories as **Sarita G Gelot Laboratory for Intelligent Rehabilitation and Affective Computing Systems.**

Dr Vilas Mujumdar, an eminent engineering leader based in Virginia, USA, has established the **Dr Vilas Mujumdar Chair** at IITGN. Mrs Rashmi Sharma and Mr Manish Sharma, Bangalore-based well-wishers of the Institute, have made a generous gift to create a faculty chair in honour of their parents **Smt Meera and Prof Girish K Sharma** to support educational and research excellence. The **Dr Dinesh O Shah Chair** has been established by Dr Dinesh O Shah, Professor Emeritus at the University of Florida, Gainesville.



We have also received **generous support for student scholarships** at IIT Gandhinagar from Mr. Saurabh Vaichal, Dr Akash Bapat, Mr Ravi Agarwal, Dr Ankita Arora, Ms Aparna Tumkur, Mr Avinash Tumkur, Mr Rishi Bubna, Ms Ngan Le, Mrs Lakshmi Vadali, Mr Kishore Konteti, Dr Shruti Jain, Dr GV Rao, among others.

Partnerships and Opportunities

The Institute signed **Memorandum of Understandings with NIT Sikkim and NIT Hamirpur** to facilitate student exchange, academic cooperation, and research collaboration among faculty members of both the institutes. The institute also entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the University of Durham, United Kingdom, for cultural, educational and scientific cooperation.

Having developed an excellent and interdisciplinary research ecosystem, **the Institute witnessed a significant increase in faculty and postdoctoral researchers this year**. In particular, the proportion of postdoctoral researchers at the Institute is currently almost 75% of the total faculty strength as against ~50% in December 2020 and ~35% in 2019. We were quick to adapt our faculty recruitment processes in the light of the pandemic, as a result of which we were able to make substantial progress in faculty recruitment this year. During the year, 16 new career faculty members joined the Institute, compared to an average of 8 new faculty additions per year in the last 12 years.

The Institute has launched several programmes to encourage young researchers and drive cutting-edge, collaborative and interdisciplinary research. The Institute introduced the **Early Career Fellowship** to encourage outstanding post-doctoral applicants to join the Institute, and also initiated the **Vikram Sarabhai Research Fellowship**, which provides students who submit their thesis within four years an enhanced fellowship.

We have also substantially increased our science communication efforts to make the research developments at the Institute accessible to the general audience. This has culminated in over 150 updates across our social media platforms, and the launch of the first edition of **Research Spectra** covering over 25 major research stories.





Campus Development

Campus development is progressing well and the Guest House, Central Arcade, Open Air Theatre, 1 BHK, 2 BHK, studio apartments, and the new hostel blocks were completed. The Bank, Post Office, and the Medical Centre are operational from their new location in the Central Arcade. Construction of the Research Park, and Sports Complex is also nearing completion.

New Beginnings

Finally, as many of you may know, I will be departing IIT Gandhinagar shortly to assume the position of Vice Chancellor of Banaras Hindu University. The opportunity to lead IITGN has been an honor of a lifetime. The dedication and passion of its students, alumni, faculty, and staff, as well as its legions of well-wishers and supporters will always be a source of enormous pride and inspiration for me.

I will forever treasure IITGN deep in my heart and will remain among IITGN's most enthusiastic supporters wherever I am. Like you, I will be following and rooting for IIT Gandhinagar as it charts new territories and scales ever higher peaks in the years to come.

With best wishes,

Sudhir K Jain

