

IIT-GN to set up four chairs in cultural expressions

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
AHMEDABAD, JANUARY 25

THE INDIAN Institute of Technology, Gandhinagar (IIT-GN) is set to bring in four endowed chairs in Sanskrit, Urdu, Classical Indian Music and Indian Performing Arts to promote Indian cultural traditions in its curriculum. For the 'Chairs in Cultural Expressions' the institute will engage full-time and part-time instructors, scholars and performers for varying durations in each of the four areas.

"Exposing students to the diverse forms of India's cultural expressions is one of the distinctive features of an IIT Gandhinagar education. The Chairs in Cultural Expressions underscore IITGN's commitment to critical thinking, creativity and appreciation of India's cultural heritage in its educational programs," IIT-GN Director Prof Sudhir Jain said.

In addition to offering courses in Sanskrit, Urdu, Classical Indian Music and Indian Performing Arts, the Chairs will enable the Institute to bring eminent scholars as visiting professors or scholars-in-residence for lectures, seminars and co-curricular programs.

There are two aspects to the Chairs. One is the course work

which will start from the next academic year (2020-21) and the second is in terms of activities like seminars, lectures, programmes which will start as soon as a Chair is established. One or two chairs will be fully active by the next academic year.

Srinivas Reddy, a faculty member at Brown University, who has served as assistant professor of South Asian Studies at IIT-GN from 2012-2017, said, "The Chairs in Cultural Expressions offer a unique model for promoting the cultural heritage of India within an academic setting. The Chairs will establish a continuity of teaching and research in these fields while remaining flexible enough to attract the finest scholars and practitioners from around the world." The institute is currently raising endowments to support each of the four chairs.

The institute currently offers a five-week immersive foundation programme for the first year BTech students which focuses on creativity, communication, leadership, ethics, social engagement and physical activity. It also offers a six-week Summer Explorer Fellowship under which students travel the length and breadth of India on just Rs 900 a day to cover travel, accommodation and living expenses.

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Source: Indian Express

Link: <http://epaper.indianexpress.com/1998224/Ahmedabad/January-26-2018#page/2/1>

Date: 26/01/2019