

IITK and Its Alumni: Past, Present, Future

IITK was established in 1960; its alumni history began with its pioneering graduating batch in 1965. As this first batch of IITK alumni spread across India and the world, in professions ranging from academia to the corporate world, from civil services to the media, it began the trend that today forms the most visible global face of IIT Kanpur. In fact, if IITK today has a global brand value, it is, to a large extent, created and consolidated by this, the largest and ever-growing part of the IITK community – our Alumni. And yes, our alumni are very much a part of our community; like NRIs, these NRIITians, are a defining feature of IITK identity. Not only are they the repositories of our past – a living memory bank, but are also active shapers of the Institute’s present, and visionary prophets of our future. As such, the journey of the relationship between the Institute and its alumni is an ongoing one, with a rich past and a promising future. This document attempts to trace this journey by dwelling upon some important landmarks, some memorable moments, and some future hopes and desires.

Let us begin this journey with a personal encounter between the past and the present...

Generation Gap or Generation Bridge?:

A first-hand account of a meeting between the FIRST STUDENT OF IITK (60001) and a second-year IITK student (Y7*)**

We had just got back from our homes after the long summer holidays and were busy in arranging our new rooms. We had got the news that an alumnus was coming to visit our hall to meet the hall residents in an informal way. Initially, this didn’t interest us much, but in the evening when we were going to the canteen to munch upon some snacks, we saw the ex-Gymkhana president entering the hall with an old man – we guessed that he must be the alumnus whose visit was scheduled to the hall. So, we just went along to see the proceedings.

The old man introduced himself as the first student of the pioneer batch (Roll no 60001). We found in him a very friendly person who did not talk as though he was in his sixties but rather he interacted with us as though he was one of us. This was quite a novel and surprising package for us.

The man then started talking about how IIT Kanpur was in its budding stages. He told us that IITK was started in the canteen of HBTI with the classes held in class-rooms in an extension wing of HBTI and since IITK did not have hostels of its own, IITK students were accommodated in the hostels of HBTI. They moved to the new campus when he was in third year. Until then, various types of accommodation were provided to the students including providing rented houses in Kanpur to the *second and third* batch students. He also told us about how IIT Kanpur benefitted from the consortium of nine US universities through the Kanpur Indo American Program (KIAP:1962-1972) which helped it in having a good number of visiting US faculty and in arranging technological facilities matching with the best in the world.

After talking for a few minutes, he asked students to come up with questions that they wanted to ask him. He specifically asked the first year students to participate more in this question-answer round.

When asked about ragging, he told us that even though they were of the pioneer batch they had to face ragging from the students of HBTI. Actually, the HBTI students were not too happy about sharing their hostels with the IITK students and ragged them to declare their supremacy. This proved to be quite a hilarious thing for all of us and all of us had a good laugh over it. When asked about the relevance of ragging, he said that it was meant to be fun for both the seniors and the juniors and thus he had no objections to it. However he pointed out that ragging at the cost of junior's sentiments was certainly bad and the seniors must act responsibly in this context. Then somebody from the second year asked him about the counselling service. He told us that the counselling service came into existence when he was in his third year. Thus, the first student guides were the fourth-yearites as opposed to the present system of having second-yearites as the student guides. He praised the counselling service and said that it was doing a fine job helping new students to settle in a new environment altogether.

The speaker then concluded by wishing us good luck for the rest of our life at IITK and then left after saying goodbye to all of us. We were all impressed by the charisma of this person, his way of interacting with us and the way in which he introduced us to various facets of IITK history. We were all picturing ourselves in his shoes thinking about our future; we came to know what a real IITian is all about and also came to realize about the elite platform given to us as a student. The talk by this person was really an experience we would never forget.

“This person”, whom many of us know by the name of Abhay Bhushan, is of course part of the very beginning of this story we are tracing here.

But in this story, past and present come together not just through such personal encounters, but in many larger and more complex ways through the formation of organizations and the building of institutions. Let us now turn to a few of these...

Alumni Association (AA)

The Alumni Association was founded in *March 1967* with mutual coordination between Institute authorities such as the then *Deputy* Director, Prof. M. S. Muthana *as* President, and some faculty members such as Prof. K. R. Sarma as office bearers. The Life-membership Fee was kept as Rs.25/- and about 100 Alumni and Faculty Members became Life Members. However, in this, its first incarnation, the Alumni Association went into cold storage by 1969, remaining there till 1974 when turmoil *at* IITK due to numerous factors, including the death of a student in the Health Center, was followed by the simultaneous resignations of the Director & Chairman BOG as part of the resolution of the crisis. At this point, several alumni felt the need for an independent body, namely, the Alumni Association which came into existence under the leadership of Dr. V. Bansal, an alumnus-faculty at IITK who became Chairperson of AA in 1975. *In order to get a historical perspective, it would be interesting to have the story of this second incarnation of the Alumni Association narrated by Dr Bansal himself:*

“The Alumni Association IIT Kanpur was born as an idea. The birth of this Alumni Association is an example, how an idea, like a seed, if provided with proper soil and fertilizer, helps in the germination of that seed which grows from a tiny seedling to an impressive tree. 1974 was a year of turmoil for IIT Kanpur. There were protests and marches, a near paralysis of normal functioning in the Institute. I had just joined the faculty in January with great expectations. A majority of the faculty were familiar faces as I had graduated in 1966, less than eight year earlier. Several newer faculty members included my batch-mates or contemporaries of student days at IIT Kanpur.

One of the batch-mates, Pratap Chandra happened to be visiting the Campus in late December 1974 and watched the situation first hand. In the evening as we met for tea, the talk naturally turned to the ongoing unrest and the danger it posed to the academic excellence of the Institute for which it had made a mark. It was a common feeling amongst those 5-6 of us present at tea, that one of the reasons for the present turmoil was the absence of any internal body which selflessly cared and worked for the good of the Institute. It was further agreed that an alumni association can be such a body which would naturally fit that role. Most of us had seen firsthand, the important role that alumni associations played in guiding and financing their alma-maters, such as, the universities in USA. Thus the idea of starting an alumni association was born. The idea of starting the Alumni Association of IIT Kanpur was received with great enthusiasm by the senior faculty members also some of whom were in administration too. As I look back, I can not help recall what the founder director of IIT Kanpur, Dr. P. K. Kelker used to say, “ we all are instruments in the hands of destiny; it is destiny that chooses one to perform ones role which then becomes part of history.” Guided by some inner voice, having been chosen by destiny to perform this role, I took it upon myself to carry this idea of starting the Alumni Association forward with the help of like-minded alumni-faculty”.

The whole of 1975 saw hectic activity on several fronts including collection of current addresses of the alumni and preparations for an alumni convention on the Campus. Dr. G.D. Agarwal, professor of Civil Engineering was instrumental in the conceptualizing, planning and securing of financial help from the BOG for the first Alumni Convention, a two-day affair in January 1976. A General Body Meeting of the Alumni Association was held on September 9th, 1975 in L-6, Lecture Hall Complex. In that meeting several important decisions were taken, such as, publication of a periodical newsletter, collection of alumni addresses from all possible sources, encourage formation of local Chapters of the IIT/K Alumni Association; identified a faculty member from each department to collect Departmental news for inclusion in the Alumni Newsletter. The motto of the Alumni Association was decided as, “To contribute to the growth and advancement of the Alma mater”. An ad-hoc Working Committee of the Alumni Association was constituted with Dr. V Bansal as Chairman. Several other ad-hoc Committees, like the Publication Committee, Address Collection and Compilation Committee, and Constitution Committee were also formed to carry forward the work of the Association during 1975.

1975 thus became a watershed year in the history of AA. The first printed Alumni Newsletter was published in December 1975. In his message for the Newsletter, Dr M L Dhar, Chairman BOG wrote, “...A continuing interest of the alumni in the welfare of the Institute would go a long way in promoting healthy traditions of academic and technological progress of the

institute....” The First Convention of the alumni was held on January 25 and 26, 1976. Besides the Working Committee which acted as the Organizing Committee, the other committees which worked hard to hold the alumni Convention were: Reception and Transportation (Convener, Dr P Dayaratnam), Food and Accommodation (Convener, Dr N G R Iyengar), Entertainment and Visits (Convener, Dr J D Borwanker), Souvenir (Convener, Dr L P Singh), Programmes (Convener, Dr M P Kapoor) and Publicity (Convener, Dr D Balasubramanian). Many faculty members, student volunteers and employees of the Institute also helped in organizing the Convention. The Board of Governors in a magnanimous gesture allocated a sum of rupees fifteen thousand as financial support to hold the Convention. All the facilities of the Institute were made available too by the administration to facilitate the holding of the Convention.

The two days of the Convention were packed with activity. It started on 25th morning with the Registration of the alumni participants followed by the Inaugural Session Chaired by Shri Gaur Hari Singhania with Dr R C Mehrotra, Vice Chancellor, Delhi University as the Chief Guest. Three business sessions were held, two on the first day and one on the second day as follows: Session I : Assessment of the Undergraduate Programme at IIT Kanpur by the Alumni; Session Chairman – Dr A S Parasnis. Session II : Role of Alumni in, 1. Strengthening the Alumni Association, 2. Upholding the Eminence of IIT Kanpur , 3. Contribution to the Growth of IIT Kanpur; Session Chairman – Dr C N R Rao. Session III : Adoption of Constitution of IIT Kanpur Alumni Association; Session Chairman – Dr S Chander.

The last session of the Convention was the Concluding Session Chaired by Dr E C Subbarao. The Keynote Address in the Concluding Session was delivered by Dr S Ganguli, Resident Director IEL Kanpur who in 1990 was appointed as the Chairman BOG of IIT Kanpur. The Constitution of the Association drafted by the Constitution Committee was adopted in Session III on 26th January 1976.

The office bearers elected to the first Executive Committee for the term 1976-78 were: President- Mr Prakash Khemani (BT/EE/1965); Vice President- Mr Vishnu Agarwal (BT/EE/1965); Secretary- Dr Virendra Bansal (BT/MetE/1966); Treasurer- Dr N G R Iyengar (PhD/AE/1970); Members- Dr J P Gupta (BT/ChE/1966), Dr S Chander (BT/MetE/1968), Mr Sudhir Seth (BT/EE/1969).

Four resolutions were unanimously passed in Session III. They were:

Resolution No. 1 was addressed to the Academic Senate to provide facilities to alumni to undergo refresher courses.

Resolution No. 2 was again addressed to the Senate for organizing programmes inviting alumni to share their experience with the faculty and the students of IITK and to fill leave vacancies in the faculty with qualified alumni.

Resolution No. 3 - Resolved that the Chairman, BOG be approached to give adequate representation to the Alumni Association in the BOG, the Senate and other such bodies of the Institute.

Resolution No. 4 - Resolved that the BOG and the Director of the Institute be approached for allocating adequate office accommodation and associated facilities to the Alumni Association necessary for achieving its objectives.

During the Senate's 57th meeting the Senate considered these resolutions and decided that Resolution no.1 be referred to the S.P.G.C., Resolution no 2 be referred to DOFA and Director and resolution no 3 regarding representation of the Alumni on the Senate was referred to the Rules Committee. The BOG in its 55th meeting held on 21st February 1976 considered the resolutions no. 3 and 4. It expressed its inability to accept resolution no. 3 as it was outside of their purview but accepted the resolution no. 4 and advised the Director to extend necessary facilities to the Alumni Association. The Senate took the following decisions on the Resolutions no. 1, 2 and 3 in its 72nd meeting held on 29th March and 2nd April 1978:

1. Visiting Appointments would be considered for Alumni in the Departments,
2. Alumni of the Institute should have the opportunity to undergo refresher courses with the permission of the Director,
3. Alumni representation on Senate be sought through provisions of Article 14(d) of the IIT Act.

The newly formed Alumni Association was conceived as an independent entity separate from the Institute, duly registered as a Society with the state of Uttar Pradesh. An unwritten code of conduct for the Association was to steer clear of controversial internal matters of the Institute. It was hoped that the Alumni Association will help build bridges between the Institute and the alumni and will create goodwill and a feeling of love and belonging in the alumni so that they become a source of strength for the Institute in future. The Alumni Association just continued to do that till early nineties - keeping alumni in touch with the Institute and with fellow alumni through the Newsletter without asking for any thing in return except that they keep in touch with the Association and the Institute, all through the voluntary hard work of the Executive committee members and a band of selfless committed alumni. The thinking in the Alumni Association and the EC was that any fund raising for the Institute will best be done by the Institute as and when it is ready. All this work of the initial 15-20 years is paying handsome dividend now to the Institute in terms of financial support from the alumni for the infrastructure and academic programmes. It is a matter of great satisfaction that over the years the Association has grown and is indeed fulfilling its role that was hoped and envisioned for it. The Newsletter was mailed to all alumni in India and abroad whose current addresses were available with the Association.

The Executive Committee appointed a committee in April 1976 to frame the bye laws of the Alumni Association. The Bye Laws were formally adopted by General Body on February 12, 1977. The Institute declared February 12th 1977 as Alumni Day to honor its alumni. Chapters/Sections of the Association started forming in various places as the word got around through the Alumni Newsletter and by word of mouth of the formal starting of the Association. This necessitated a set of Bye Laws which were adopted by the General Body February 19, 1978. Dr M Anandkrishnan was the Science Counsellor at the Indian Embassy in USA around this time and he was of great help in those early years in collecting addresses of our alumni in USA and also in distributing our Newsletters amongst them. He even offered to get in touch with the alumni settled in Canada when he visited there next.

The Institute was unable to provide any office space to the Association for several years but the Association continued to receive all other help in cash and kind to help it carry on its activities. A working arrangement for secretarial help was worked out on the basis of payment of nominal honorarium, first with the office staff of the Placement Office and later on with the Dean of Students' Affairs office. A seminar on 'Entrepreneurship opportunities in U.P.' was organized in January 1977 at IIT Kanpur for the benefit of the graduating students. Several of the speakers in this seminar were themselves IIT/K alumni. Mr Raj K Bhargava IAS, Commissioner of Industries U.P. assured us to extend all help to the alumni whether in India or abroad who were interested in setting up their own industries in U.P. An announcement of it was made in our December 1976 Newsletter asking interested alumni to send in their names to the Secretary, Alumni Association. The names of eight alumni who responded were sent to Mr Bhargava for necessary assistance.

The Secretary of the Association was like the Chief Executive Officer and was the hub of all the Association activities; he used to convene all the meetings of the EC, execute the decisions of the EC meetings, circulate Minutes of each EC meeting, maintain the Minutes in a Minutes File/Register which was also required by law since the Association was a registered society. The Executive Committee started promoting holding of Silver Jubilee Re-unions (SJRs) at the Campus beginning with the Batch that graduated in 1968, largely due to the necessary planning by the alumni of that batch in the faculty, namely, S P Mehrotra, Dipak Kunzru, Santosh K Gupta etc. The idea of the SJRs caught on from there. With the rapid changes in means of communication, the ease of e-mails and the sudden change in the funding pattern of the IITs by the Central Government requiring the need for a Dean of Resource Planning and Generation, the Institute in late nineties, started promoting the Silver Jubilee Reunions of alumni on the Campus in a more lavish manner. With the success of the SJRs came the idea of having 35 year reunions too, starting this time with the Pioneering Batch which had graduated in 1965. The 35 year reunion of the First Batch in December 1999 coincided with the dedication of the Pioneer Batch Continuing Education Centre building which was partly funded by the contributions of the first batch alumni. This thoughtful gesture on the part of the Pioneering Batch has now become a tradition of giving by the alumni to the institute particularly at the time of their Reunions.

How to raise funds for the Institute through Alumni was always an issue which concerned the Association. But no workable mechanism was in sight. As Dr. Bansal recalls: "*I was in USA in the summer of 1992 for a Conference at Milwaukee and used this opportunity to extend my visit to seven weeks to meet alumni in various parts of the country. I visited Chicago, Cleveland, Boston, New Jersey, New York, Atlanta, Salt Lake City, Berkeley, San Francisco and Los Angeles and met groups of our alumni. I collected their addresses as many of them were not receiving the Newsletter. The alumni were very positive about IIT/K and were willing to make financial contribution if they were assured of proper accountability. I met Mr Rakesh Sharma who hosted me for the New Jersey and New York leg of my visits and helped me meet Mr Anil Bhandari, a 1969 B Tech, in New York who offered to set up a Trust in USA for the benefit of IIT Kanpur. On my return, I submitted a detailed report of my meetings with the US based alumni to the Director and suggested that the Institute may follow up on the offer of Mr Anil Bhandari for setting up the Trust as that will open a channel for receiving financial support by the alumni in USA. The Institute did follow it up and Mr Bhandari set up the Trust and met all the expenses himself*".

One of the major hurdles faced by the Alumni Association was the lack of current addresses of the alumni. The total number of alumni in 1975 was around 3500. The Institute till then had had no provision to keep in touch with the alumni and so an all out effort was mounted to collect the current addresses of the alumni through all possible means. For the first Alumni Convention, addresses of over 1000 alumni were collected and they were contacted. By January 1979 the Alumni Newsletter was being mailed to about 1300 alumni in India, 350 alumni abroad which included the KIAP faculty whose addresses were available, all the final year IITK students and all the IITK faculty members. Several KIAP faculty members who were receiving the Alumni Newsletter wrote back to the Alumni Association that they would like to continue receiving the Newsletter and expressed fond memories of their stay at IIT Kanpur. The Computer Science department faculty helped maintain the alumni database on computer from 1982 onwards. The computer based alumni data allowed the Association to have the alumni lists, alphabetically, year of graduation & branch-wise and city-wise. By 1985 the total number of alumni had reached about 8000 and the alumni database had current addresses of about 4300 alumni. With the help of a generous grant by the Institute from the Silver Jubilee Celebration funds and with technical help from the faculty and staff of Computer Science, the Association published the first Alumni Directory in early 1986. The Directory had current addresses of 4235 alumni listed by Year of Graduation, Branch and Degree; it had a section where the listings were arranged geographically by countries for alumni who were abroad and by cities in India and also a section with alphabetical listing to permit search by name, city or degree. .

The compilation of this database has proved to be an invaluable resource not just for the Alumni Association, but also for the Institute to further its fund-raising activities beginning early nineties. Local chapters were formed in Kanpur, Lucknow, Delhi, Chandigarh, Bangalore and Bombay in India and in Chicago in USA as early as 1977-78. The Chicago chapter even published a newsletter thanks to the efforts of Mr Ajay Gupta, Suman Mehta, M P Singh and H S Lamba. The Alumni Association has also enriched the Institute's academic culture through various other activities. In 1979, for example, the AA organised an Exhibition of alumni products (Coordinator, Dr Virendra Bansal) in the Students' Activities Centre (SAC). The Exhibition coincided with the Annual Alumni General Body meeting on 4th March 1979. 24 alumni entrepreneurs displayed a wide range of products from books, aluminum utensils, invertors, Custom Audio accessories, Transmission Line and Microwave Towers, Educational Computers to Oscilloscopes and other electronic products. The exhibition was a grand success and it fulfilled the twin objectives, namely, to highlight the contribution of IIT Kanpur alumni to the nation and to advertise the alumni products for their benefit. It would not be out of place to reproduce some of the comments by the visitors in the Visitor's book about the Exhibition: "Congratulations. Only alumni can prove the worth of an Institute and I am proud of them after seeing their exhibits." - Prof A. Bhattacharya, the then Director, IIT/K. "Excellent effort. I am very impressed by the versatility of our alumni."- Prof V Rajaraman. "Metallurgists make batteries and stereo and ME's extract fragrant oils! Good show!!" – Prof Hari Sahasrabuddhe. "As a student who is about to become one of the alumni this year, I am very proud of the display." – Murlidhar Vedula. "Excellent exhibition. There should be a similar such effort showing the works of the alumni, undergraduate and post graduate students." - Dr S G Dhande.

The 'Kelkar Alumni Lecture Series', was also started in 1979. It was named, with his permission, after the first Director of IITK, Prof. P. K. Kelkar. The list of Kelkar Alumni Lectures delivered so far is given -----

The Alumni Association started organizing Farewell Tea to all graduating students from 1980 onwards, in the month of April. In December 1980, the Executive Committee persuaded Professor V Rajaraman to organize a two day seminar on Microcomputer Concepts and Applications to coincide with the AGBM. This was to encourage larger number of alumni to attend the AGBM. In the late seventies and eighties, the Alumni News letter was the only publication which carried a variety of news about the faculty, the Institute, the Departments, the alumni and the students and was published two to three times a year. Occasionally, there were useful articles too which were contributed by the faculty or the alumni. The Newsletter was printed in the Graphic Arts Section of the Institute and it did not carry any advertisements. The Institute provided the paper, the printing and the postage for their mailing. In 1982, the Association organized a 'Technical Paper Presentation Contest' for the Institute undergraduate students to inculcate the spirit of creativity and innovation amongst them. Three cash prizes (Rs 500/-, 300/- and 200/-) were instituted for the top three presentations. Twelve papers were submitted by the students for this contest. The second such Contest was held in February 1983 and the authors presented their papers to a distinguished audience of faculty and students.

Dr P K Kelkar was the Chief Guest at the Fourteenth Convocation held on May 17, 1981 and delivered the Convocation Address. He was also conferred with the degree of Doctor of Science (Honoris Causa) on this occasion and thus he became an alumnus. In his Address, Dr Kelkar described the creativity and zeal of the people involved in the initial stage of the institute as follows, " The way things happened, the way diverse people were drawn in and the most unusual spurt of ideas, innovation and adventure, occasionally bordering on the reckless, have convinced me that the coming in to being of IIT Kanpur was a historical necessity. History chose all those who were associated with IIT Kanpur in the very beginning and in the course of its subsequent development. That is how we participated, not as ourselves but as Instruments of History." Talking about IIT Kanpur he observed, "The overall picture that emerges when one takes a detached view of what IIT Kanpur looks like today, one gets a feeling that the 'genetic code' which History wrote and which was nourished by the idealism of so many, including the students who were drawn in its orbit in the early years, has not been erased. It still has, deep inside, vitality and the spirit of adventure and the urge to go on accumulating intellectual capital....." Dr Kelkar praised the first batch of undergraduates who entered the IIT/K in July 1960 in these words, " The first batch of students who joined IIT Kanpur were the real torch bearers of its spirit which they passed on to the generations of students who followed them. All the old timers on the faculty, I imagine, must be remarking occasionally, particularly when they are wistfully recalling the past, that the first batch was, perhaps, the best batch." Dr Kelkar concluded his Address with the following advice to the degree recipients, " In all humility I command to you the farewell advice which the Tathagat gave to his favorite disciple, Anand: Be a lamp unto yourself and work out your own salvation. May God bless you!"

The Ninth Alumni Convention was held on January 4 to 6, 1985 when the Institute was celebrating its Silver Jubilee. One of the high lights of the Convention was the Fifth Kelkar Alumni Lecture delivered by Dr Raja Ramanna. Three panel discussions were also held. Their topics were: (i) How does the IIT Kanpur Education fits the need of the present time, (ii) Do

alumni have a role in IIT Kanpur development? And (iii) Entrepreneurial opportunities for our graduates in light of experience of alumni. Another high light of the Convention was the release of a Souvenir Album which contained photographs and thumbnail sketches of the first five batches (1965 to 1969) of alumni, by Prof S Sampath, the then Director of the Institute.

One of the other major contributions of the Association has been its initiative for instituting the Distinguished Alumni Awards. On the basis of the report of the committee constituted by the Executive Committee of AA a unanimous resolution was passed in the AGBM of the alumni on March 7, 1987 making a detailed proposal to the Senate and the BOG to institute the Distinguished Alumni Awards (DAA). The Board of Governors in its meeting held on September 11, 1987 approved the proposal and paved the way for the institution of the Distinguished Alumni Awards. All nominations for DAA are invited and received by the Alumni Association. The nominations are evaluated by a committee constituted for this purpose as laid down by the BOG. The Awards are announced by the Director and are presented during the AA Conventions. The award consists of a Plaque and a Citation. The first DAA was given to Shri Satish Kaura (BT/EE/1966), MD, Samtel (India) Ltd. on March 25, 1989 in the 13th Annual Alumni Convention.

Since the creation of the office of Dean of Resource Planning and Generation (DRPG) in 1993, the Institute has directly become more involved with the Alumni activities, and the Alumni Association has started function in tandem with this office.

The DRPG Office

Deanships in IITK have historically been created on the basis of perceived need and utility. The most recent of these is the Dean of Resource Planning and Generation (DRPG), which has had a deep and direct impact on Alumni-Institute relations.

Created in September 1993 as the Dean of Planning and Resource Management (which was later changed to Dean of Resource Planning and Generation), this position was direct result of the massive economic re-structuring of India in 1991-92. The Government of India had over the years been generously supporting technical education in India. However subsidies were now reducing as the government felt a pressure on its financial resources and, as a result, in 1992 it froze its financial grants to academic institutions such as IITs. To tackle the serious resource crunch that this government decision created for them, all the IITs met to put up a set of proposals for additional resource generation which included the establishment of corpus fund. Once the government agreed to the proposal of corpus funds, IITK set up the office of the Dean Resource Planning and Generation to collect the money for such a corpus fund. The first person to occupy this newly created position was Dr. A. K. Mittal (IME Department), who helped to structure this idea of a corpus into an Endowment Fund. Dr. Mittal proposed the creation of a management committee, appointed by the Board of Governors, IITK, to manage the Endowment Fund. In addition, he proposed the creation of an Investment Committee which would be responsible for examining the cash flow situation and investment opportunities available within the policy guidelines prescribed by the Board of Governors/Management Committee and make recommendations to the Director for a specific investment. The constitution of the two committees was as follows:

Management Committee

- Ex-officio members : Director, Deputy Director, Dean Resource Planning & Generation and Registrar
- 5 members nominated by BOG, including at least one faculty member and one alumnus

Investment Committee

Dean Resource Planning & Generation, Registrar, Deputy Registrar (Finance & Accounts), Assistant Registrar (RP&G) and one faculty or staff member.

But before these committees could begin functioning, there was the need for a corpus constituting the Endowment Fund. And this was to be done primarily from donations, especially donations from our Alumni. Before progressing further, therefore, with the history of DRPG, let us go back to look at the history of alumni donations to the Institute...

It is not as if no alumni donations existed before the establishment of DRPG office or the Endowment Fund, but they were few and far between. The reason for this, however, lay less in the alumni's desire to 'give back' to their alma mater, and more with their alma mater's inability to come up with an acceptable process to administer such donations while remaining within the purview of central government regulations. Dr. Kunzru, for example, recalls that during his tenure as treasurer and secretary of Alumni Association, the Institute was not allowed to receive direct donations on large scale. Dr. Kunzru remembers his batch mate Mr. Rajiv Bhargava, then placed in Alaska, who during a visit to the Institute wished to give money but the Institute had no way of taking it, so he just went back. Later on he gave the money for the "Raj Bhargava lounge" which is in ChE department, though he was from the Mechanical Engineering Dept, simply because his friend (Dr. Kunzru) was in Chemical Engineering, and so could coordinate the use of the money within the Institute. Similarly, there were a few small scholarship donations before 1992-93, though these were not necessarily directly from alumni. One of Dr. Kunzru's batch mates, for example, had a brother who was also an IITK student two years junior to Dr. Kunzru, and who passed away while doing his B-tech. So his father instituted a scholarship in his name. Such scholarships were governed through the Institute funds.

However, with the establishment of the Endowment Fund, a completely new phase began in terms of alumni donations to the Institute. Though preliminary work was done in this regard during visits by various IIT faculty to various US cities, where they began to meet IITK alumni to build contacts with them, the first formal request to the alumni in this regard went out only in 1994 when the director sent the following letter to alumni:

Dear Alumni,

India is at a threshold of an economic revolution, which is going to have its own impact on the Institute. The Government of India has over the years been generously supporting technical education in India. However subsidies were now reducing and IIT Kanpur like other Universities and Technological Institute in India were facing a serious resource crunch. At the same time the current scenario has provided us an opportunity for taking new initiatives to keep the Institute dynamic and vibrant. This calls for taking of bold initiatives with a view to design strategies to meet the twin objectives of resource generation and improved linkages with industry. As an alumni of this Institute you are the best judge of the strengths and weaknesses of the Institute. I take this opportunity to extend an open invitation to each one of you to help the Institute in facing this new challenge.

We are looking forward to your constructive suggestions and unstinted support.

(R.C. Malhotra)

As is evident from this letter, the attempt at this point was to forge a comprehensive all-encompassing relationship with the alumni to get them involved actively in all aspects of Institute development, and not just its financial needs. And the alumni responded eagerly and expansively to this invitation, becoming one of the most valuable resources in the growth and development of the Institute. The history of DRPG is, in many ways, the history of this collaboration between the alumni and the Institute to literally and figuratively change the face of IIT Kanpur.

Let us begin to look at this collaboration from its most visible aspect – the financial one. Walking around the campus today, one is immediately and abundantly aware of alumni contributions to our physical environs – from Park 67 to Pioneering Batch extension centre for the Visitor's Hostel, there are today innumerable buildings that are in existence largely due to alumni funding. This immensely fruitful financial relationship, however, did not emerge overnight. There was a rocky period in the beginning as both alumni and Institute authorities negotiated not just the practical problems associated with handling such funding at the Institute level, but more importantly, the more tricky issues of trust and reliability that necessarily accompanied such large financial investments on the part of the alumni.

Recognising the importance of this issue, the first Dean of Resource Planning and Generation, Dr. A. K. Mittal, began his tenure by initiating a closer dialogue with alumni. Along with the then Director, Dr. Melhotra, Dr. Mittal visited the US not only to sensitize alumni about the needs of IITK, but also to establish the personal contact that is so essential to build trust. Modeling the IITK-Alumni relationship on the one already in existence between various US universities and their alumni also helped the DRPG to create an image of reliability since this model was familiar to many alumni. Furthermore, Dr. Mittal and Dr. Mehrotra also met with alumni already engaged in collecting funds within the US for IITK – the ones who had set up the IITK Trust, which later became the IITK Foundation (more details on this later). Through this multi-pronged approach, an initial platform was created for the first major alumni financial investment in IITK, which came from the first graduating batch from the Institute.

The construction of the Pioneering Batch Education Centre is thus a landmark event. While initial alumni apprehensions about costing and execution of the project were overcome by the Institute's assurance that it would provide for any shortfall in the budget (as it did), the actual completion of the project in a timely fashion cemented a bedrock of trust based on a recognition by the alumni that 'we mean business'. Donations began to pour in after this; the following list provides a small overview of how alumni, through these donations, have literally provided our Institute with a veritable face-lift:

- PBCEC: The Pioneer Batch contributed generously towards the making of Pioneer Batch Continuing Education Centre building which now forms a landmark on the IIT Kanpur map and started an excellent tradition of contributing to its alma mater.
- AUDITORIUM
- Furnishing of Auditorium: Batch of 1966 funding has been utilized mainly for furnishing of the IIT Kanpur Auditorium.
- Audio Systems for Auditorium - Batch of 1978 funding has been utilized for various purposes of IIT Kanpur audio systems.
- Lighting System for Auditorium: Batch of 1990 fund has been utilized for the Auditorium's lighting system.
- PARK 67 Bargad Plaza: Batch of 1967 funding has been utilized for Bargad Plaza of IIT Kanpur. It is now known as Park 67.
- H R Kadim Diwan Building: With a generous donation from a distinguished alumnus of IIT Kanpur (who wants his name to be used sparingly), the CSE department now has a new building. The building is called the H R Kadim Diwan Building.
- Prabhu Goel Research Centre for Computer and Internet Security: Established through a generous grant from Dr. Prabhu Goel
- Samtel Centre: Mr. Satish Kaura (BT/EE/1966), Chairman and MD of Samtel Group of Industries, the first awardee of Distinguished Alumnus Award of IIT Kanpur has been the principal motivator, resource provider and conceptualizer in establishing the center.

And the list goes on...

Through it all, the DRPG has ensured complete transparency with regard to fund-utilisation with the alumni. For instance, as DRPG, Dr. Kunzru ensured the maintenance of a website detailing up-to-date information about all alumni-funded projects, and also sent regular feedback to the alumni. Furthermore, alumni were also involved directly in the management of funds. For example, when the 1998 batch gave donation for computing facilities in Hall 2, a couple of batch mates of Dr. Kunzru, who were in Kanpur at the time, became actively involved in the whole process of events. Similarly, Dr. V Bansal and Mr. Vishnu Agarwal from Lucknow were directly involved in the utilisation of the funds donated by the 1966 batch for auditorium seats. Alumni were also actively involved in designing and construction of the Outreach Centre.

With time and effort, thus, not only was a strong trust established between alumni and the Institute with respect to fund-utilisation, but also a stronger and more widespread relationship was established between the Institute and its alumni that extended much beyond the gathering of funds for necessary infrastructural development of the Institute. This stronger relationship was forged through the personalizing of relationships between alumni and members of the institute, through individual emails to alumni as well as Dr. Sudhir Jain's (DRPG from 2005-08) innovative programme of Annual Gift Programme whereby alumni were contacted on phone by current IITK students to tell them about smaller funding opportunities through which the alumni could support various Institute activities. A result of such programmes has been much broader-based alumni support for the Institute in the expansion of its academic activities. Given below is a list of some of the alumni-funded programmes currently running in the Institute:

- Scholarships: From SURGE('77) to MCM's to department and program specific ones based solely on merit, scholarships come in all varieties. The alumni have contributed for creating around 60 scholarships benefitting 87 students every year. In the last 2 years the largest number of UG Scholarships have been set up largely due to the donations of alumni friends and former faculty members.
- Travel support: Presenting research papers in International Conferences abroad is an important but expensive enterprise, so to bear a part of this burden DRPG has provided nearly 23 lakhs to 70 postgraduate students of almost all departments in the last 2 years. The new Faculty in IITK and a couple of visiting ones has also availed Travel support for Conferences.
- Journal Publications incentive in the form of cash awards has been instituted since 2006 and over 26 lakhs has been disbursed under this programme courtesy Mr B.M.L.Jain , annual gift programme and I Research foundation.
- To encourage patent filing and bear a part of the cost a total of over 5 lakhs was granted through Annual Gift Programme in 06-07 towards 22 Indian and 1 US patent.
- Faculty Chairs: Over the past ten years distinguished and generous alumni have contributed to the establishment of special Faculty Chairs. The occupant of the chair also holds a regular position in their respective department.

Currently there are around 26 of them, most of which are open to all departments. Some of them have been created to foster special interest in a field from algorithms to archaeology, from internet space to improving quality of life in India. While three of them are by friends and admirers of Late Professors here, many among the rest are also instituted in memoriam of the donor's parents.

The contributors include distinguished alumni working in varied industries, Founder CEO's of corporations they took public in the United States, to cutting edge technology developers, like Tomahawk Cruise missile for US Defense, also includes Indian entrepreneurs like founders of Sleepwell and IndiGo.

- Distinguished Lecture Series: What began with the Kelkar Alumni Lecture Series under the auspices of the Alumni Association in 1979 has now expanded into an entire plethora of lecture series funded by various alumni. These lecture series range over department specific ones where departments are given funds to invite specialists in their fields to deliver lectures, to Institute level ones where eminent personalities from various fields, including from within the IITK alumni community are funded to come to the campus to deliver lectures on topics of their choice.

As is evident from the above, alumni continue to have a deep and abiding interest in the Institute's growth and development. And for this group of NRIITians, the Institute is not defined simply as an academic institution; it is a place, a campus, a 'home away from home' that signifies much more than classrooms and labs. Exploring this campus and its environs, in terms of both its physical and its social landscape, is very much a part of IIT students' education', and clearly the impact of this informal learning continues to exert its influence in later years. And so, when alumni donate money to the Institute, their concern incorporates this extended community. One of the best examples of this holistic view of development held by our alumni, and the DRPG's transformation of this view into practical programs, is Opportunity College. Begun in 2006, Opportunity College provides free three-month employment oriented training to young graduates from within and near the IITK campus who do not have the same opportunities as

IITK students. The training is imparted by IITK students, who thereby gain valuable teaching experience as well as an invaluable exposure to the socio-economic milieu of the world outside the one formed by the privileged faculty and students of IITK. The course material for this training, which covers English proficiency, Maths and Accounting, and Computer literacy, is custom-designed by these student-instructors with the help of IITK faculty.

As is obvious from the above, alumni have been unfailingly generous in their financial support for the development of the Institute. However, alumni support is not limited to money; they have taken an active and personal interest in the future of their juniors – IITK students. They have provided significant help in matters such as giving internships and research projects to students. For example, the first batch of alumni organized a programme so that 3-4 student could go to AT&T Bell Lab for their internship. Alumni come to campus regularly in December for placements of student. And it is as part of their interest in student placement, that alumni actually recommended a curricular revision, requesting that a special Communication Skills course be added to prepare students for entry into the professional world. Alumni thus provide not just practical professional help to students, but also act as guides and mentors in intellectual terms. For example, many of them avail of the DRPG open invitation to alumni to give seminars and lectures on topics of their interest in IITK. The same intellectual guidance is also provided more indirectly through the help alumni often provide in guiding the Institute towards prospective faculty from various institutions across the world. Not to mention the many alumni who contribute directly and continuously to the Institute by joining it as faculty themselves; at last count, 83 out of a total of 316 IITK faculty members had at least one of their degrees from this Institute. These NRIITians turned Re-IITians bring a wonderful dual perspective to the Institute, drawing on past memories and experiences to shape the present, and future, of their alma mater. From distinguished teachers and world-class researchers, to hands-on administration (currently our Director and two of our Deans are IITK alumni), these alumni who have returned to the IITK fold are not just a valuable link between the past and the future, but also the Institute and its extended family of NRIITians.

The Institute's relationship with its alumni, however, is not merely a one-way street. It is mutual in many ways. Not only does the Institute maintain constant contact with alumni through various publications and more direct communication through email / phone calls, but it also extends support in every way possible if any individual alumnus requires help in any manner. Using its own resources, and its vast network of information (including alumni database), the Institute offers valuable aid to its alumni.

IITK Foundation

The following brief history of the IIT Kanpur Foundation and alumni movement in the USA has been provided by Ram Misra'68, President and Director, IITK Foundation, and Deepak Bhagat'73, Founder, Past President, and Director, IITK Foundation:

History

The IIT Kanpur Foundation was established in August 2000 by the Founding Board Members: Prof Arakere Vasudev – a former faculty at IITK, Deepak Bhagat’73, Umang Gupta’71 and Anil Bhandari’69. Prof Vasudev was elected as its first President. Its Mission was established as: ‘To mobilize alumni and raise funds for the betterment of IIT Kanpur’.

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) of the USA granted the foundation a Tax-Exempt 501 Chap (3) (Tax ID: 94-3370645) and a Public Charity Status on January 4, 2001. This provision gives the Foundation Donors the maximum tax benefits in the US, and allows the Foundation to seek for ‘Donor Matching Funds’ from the donors’ US based corporations.

The current board consists of Abhay Bhushan’65, Ram Misra’68, Umang Gupta’71, Deepak Bhagat’73, Sanjiv Sahay’77, Rakesh Pandey’78, Atul Garg’79, Siddharth Dasgupta’80, Anjali Joshi’83 and Professor Akshai Runchal, who - in keeping up with the tradition of having a former IITK professor on the board - replaced Professor Arakere Vasudev. The three other permanent invitees to the board meetings are IITK Director (Dr. Sanjay Dhande) and Dean – RPG (Dr. Sanjeev Aggarwal) and the IITK Alumni Association president (Abhay Bhushan). The officers of the foundation are Umang Gupta – Chairman, Ram Misra - President, Abhay Bhushan - Chief Financial Officer, and Rakesh Pandey - Secretary.

Prior to the formation of the foundation, there were many attempts to organize alumni events in the USA and to connect with IITK. They were mostly local events, often triggered by the visits by IITK professors or administrators. Perhaps, the longest lasting alumni event is the picnic that was started in 1986 in the New Jersey and New York area. This picnic was the brainchild of Ram Misra’68 and Dhiraj Sharma’71. Both were working at the time in Bell Labs. The first picnic was attended by Dr. J. P Gupta’66, when he was the Scientific Officer, Indian Embassy in DC. The big credit for the longevity of the picnic goes to these alumni and their families who have hardly missed any picnics in the last 23 years – (in the order of the batch) Satya Agarwal’67, Ramesh Gupta’69, Kicha Ganapati’69, Ram Misra’68, Prem Gupta’70, Ajay Jain’70, Sheo Khetan’70, Ashok Saxena’70, Satish Bhalerao’70, Dhiraj Sharma’71 and Mani Gupta’71. This “so-called” picnic group has been the kernel of what later became the IITK East Coast Chapter.

Since the picnic started, it has been attended by many IITK professors. One of the great moments in the history of this picnic occurred in 1999 when it was attended by Mr. Narayana Murthy, Chairman of INFOSYS, Dr. K. A. Padmanabhan, Director of IITK, and industrialist Mr. Hari Bhartia, chairman of IITK Board of Governors.

There was a growing awareness of the need to have a channel for sending tax-deductible contributions to IITK by the IITK alumni living in the USA. Mr. Anil Bhandari offered to undertake the setting up of the IITK Trust. With Anil’s ground breaking hard work, the trust was finally set up in 1994. It had the US IRS approvals and income tax exemption u/s501 so the funds donated into this trust could have tax deductible status under Section 170. The tax exemption no. granted to the Trust was 13-3765034. The trust was extremely successful in collecting a significant amount of donations. The founding Directors of the Trust were: Mr Arun

Mehra (BT/ME/1966), Anil Bhandari (BT/1969) and Mr D Raj (BT/1970). In IIT Kanpur, this was the time when the Indian Government had cut the funding and the Institute was forced to look for other financial sources. In 1997, Director Dr. R. C. Malhotra and Dean Dr. Ashok Mittal visited the USA to establish contact with IITK alumni and seek support from them. A meeting was held in NJ at the residence of Ram Misra that was attended by many alumni in the NY/NJ area. At this meeting, Anil Bhandari gave a pitch for the trust and explained how it can be used for sending money to IITK. This was perhaps the first public fund-raising event for IITK in the USA. Dr. Malhotra and Dr. Mittal visited the West Coast also that included a very large meeting in LA organized by Siddharth Dasgupta, a current member of the foundation.

It was around this time (May 1997) when a real breakthrough occurred that would shape the future IITK alumni activities for good. Some key members of the 1973 batch (Ashok Kamal, Arun Seth and Deepak Bhagat in particular) discussed a need to have their batch's Silver Jubilee reunion at IIT Kanpur. They (Ashok/Arun in India and Deepak in the U.S.) took the responsibility for raising funds from their batchmates for this event. Deepak used the IITK Trust for this purpose. At the 25 year reunion in Jan 1998, the '73 batch passed a resolution to start IIT Kanpur alumni movement and decided to use the funds raised by the batch as seed money to jumpstart the alumni movement. These plans had the full support of the IITK Director, Prof. K A. Padmanabhan, who also encouraged Deepak Bhagat to energize the alumni movement in the U.S. He also introduced Deepak to Mr. Narayana Murthy at IITK who also supported the idea of increased alumni efforts in the U.S. It should be added here that the IITK Alumni Association had been in existence all these years but was not very active in the U.S.

Deepak Bhagat took the lead in forming an IITK alumni chapter in the West Coast on Dec 19th 1998 with the help of 12 other alumni (Sanjiv Sahay, Sriram Sankar, Ambrish Misra, Subhash Tandon, and Niraj Jain among them) at his home in Fremont, CA. This chapter was formally launched in Feb 1999 at a large conference room at Sun Microsystems in Menlo Park. Prof Arakere Vasudev, Abhay Bhushan, and Prof Rajeev Motwani, who attended this meeting, decided to help Deepak with the alumni effort in the West Coast. Even though Ram Misra had started the East Coast chapter informally many years ago, the West Coast chapter was the first formal chapter to be formed in the USA. Shortly after, the East Coast Chapter also formally became a chapter. Both chapters had the blessings of IITK.

The real boost to alumni activities in the USA (both Coasts) came when Prof Padmanabhan, Mr. Narayan Murthy, Mr. Bhartia and Ashok Kamal (President AA) visited the USA in 1999. This was the most serious signal from IITK that it was really serious about developing relations with IITK alumni residing in the USA. This team visited the NY/NJ area, Boston and the West Coast Bay Area. During the event in the West Coast Bay Area, a fund raising was done by a team consisting of Deepak Bhagat, Prof Vasudev, Abhay Bhushan, and Karen Vasudev (Prof Vasudev's wife). This event was very successful. The IITK Trust was used to raise money for IITK (donors wrote checks to the IITK Trust). After this event, Deepak Bhagat and Prof Vasudev approached Umang Gupta for help in alumni efforts and Umang immediately agreed. In March 2000, Prof Padmanabhan and Mr. Narayana Murthy visited the USA again to do formal fund raising with large donors. A fund raising event was held in the West Coast during which

pledges of many millions of dollars were received. The IITK Trust was once again used to send the money to IIT Kanpur.

By now, the Trust had been in operation for about 5 years and it was realized that a more formal and broad based structure was needed to mobilize alumni and raise funds for IITK. So in Aug 2000, Prof Vasudev, Deepak Bhagat, Umang Gupta, and Anil Bhandari filed the legal papers for the IIT Kanpur Foundation. The IIT Kanpur Trust that Anil Bhandari had opened in New York was closed. The first executive team of the IITK Foundation was (1) Umang Gupta - Chairman (2) Prof Vasudev - President (3) Deepak Bhagat - CFO and Secretary (4) Anil Bhandari - VP. The IRS granted us the tax-exempt status in January 2001 and the IIT Kanpur Foundation was officially born. Umang Gupta donated \$210,000 to act as a catalyst for seeding the alumni movement. The founding members also decided, as part of their strategy to mobilize alumni, to invite key leaders who have been active in alumni activities in the USA. Ram Misra, Founder President of the East Coast Chapter and Gunjan Bagla, Founder President of the LA Chapter were invited to join the board. Also, as part of the by-laws of the foundation, the president of the IITK AA was also invited. This added Sanjiv Sahay and later Atul Garg to the board. Over the five years, five members (Satish Bhalerao, Anil Bhandari, Prof. Vasudev, Gunjan Bagla, Prabhu Goel) have left the board and eight members (Ram Misra, Sanjiv Sahay, Atul Garg, Abhay Bhushan, Rakesh Pandey, Siddharth Dasgupta, Akshai Runchal and Anjali Joshi) have joined the board.

The IITK Foundation has had following executive team members since its formation:

- (a) First executive team: 2001-2003 - Chairman – Umang Gupta; President: Prof Vasudev; CFO and Secretary: Deepak Bhagat; VP – Anil Bhandari
- (b) Second executive team: 2004-2006 - Chairman – Umang Gupta; President: Deepak Bhagat; CFO : Abhay Bhushan; Secretary: Ram Misra; VP – Anil Bhandari
- (c) Third (current) Executive team: 2007-2009 - Chairman: Umang Gupta; President: Ram Misra; CFO: Abhay Bhushan; Secretary: Rakesh Pandey

Operating Procedures:

The operating procedures of the Foundation are designed to achieve the objectives of integrity, transparency, accuracy, responsiveness, consistency and proper checks and balances. The Board guides the activities of the Foundation through monthly Board meetings, which are typically held on the first Monday of each month. An agenda is published in advance and the Board meeting minutes are captured by the Secretary. All strategic and expense related decisions are made by voting on the resolutions by the board members. The strategic decisions are typically in the areas of ‘mobilization of alumni’ and ‘fund raising/donations for IITK’.

Donors to IITK identify programs for funding in consultations with IIT Kanpur. The IITK Foundation works proactively with IIT Kanpur to identify specific programmes at IITK where funding is needed and then plan coordinated fund raising programmes in various chapters.

Activities

Most of the activities of the foundation have been executed under the leadership of the current IITK Director Dr. Sanjay Dhande. His leadership has been exemplary. One of the first projects

undertaken was the creation of the alumni website (www.iitkalumni.org). The foundation took a very proactive stand on this and hired a web developing and hosting company to develop the website. It funded the entire project for many years until it was transferred to the IITK Alumni office in 2006. Another key initiative was to appoint an alumni affairs director who would devote a full time attention to the alumni affairs. Dr. G. K. Lal, a retired IITK professor, was appointed to this position in 2004. The IITK Foundation worked with Dr, Lal to get bi-monthly electronic AA Newsletter started. It was determined after a year that the position is best served by an office manager, and an office manager was hired for handling the day to day events. One lesson learned in all this was that the AA constitution needed change. The foundation played a leadership role and worked with the then AA president Sanjiv Sahay to float the idea of change of AA Constitution and supported the next AA President Atul Garg to implement the change in AA Constitution. Atul also introduced the concept of e-voting for the election of AA office bearers and made it truly global.

The IITK Foundation worked with Dr. Dhande, IITK Director, to clearly define the roles of Dean -RPG (Resource and Program generation) and the Alumni Affairs Director. Fortunately, Dr. Sudhir Jain took over as the DRPG in 2005. Dr. Jain's passion for fund-raising and the desire to think out of the box has taken the office of RPG to new heights and the foundation has been an important player in this. Over 30 chaired professorships were created, many scholarships have been set up and a large number of lecture series have been established. The foundation so far has raised close to \$5 million for IITK. The previous 'IITK Trust' raised an additional \$0.33M during its existence. Brick and Mortar buildings include Continuing Education Building from batch of 1965; Alumni & Placement Center Building from batches of 1969 and 1980; Park from Batch of 1967; the faculty lounge from Batch of 1968.

Future Plans

So far the focus of the foundation has been on alumni mobilization for fund raising. There is a general feeling among the foundation board members that the foundation also needs to focus on leveraging and mobilizing alumni talents and experience, connections, and other non-alumni resources for the betterment of IIT, in addition to fund raising. The most recent example of new potential activities is the position paper on suicides in IITK that was undertaken by Ram Misra and Rakesh Pandey. Another example will be to work on another position paper on IITK governance. This request came from Dr. Dhande in a conversation with Rakesh Pandey. For launching such activities, two things have to happen. One, IITK needs to legitimize these new activities; two, the financial expenses for such activities must be raised for the said purpose.

We began this journey of exploring the Institute-Alumni relationship with an account of a personal encounter between a current student and IITK's 'first' alumnus. Coming full circle, let us conclude this short jaunt down memory lane with another view of current and past students' interaction, a view that looks, once again, at the ways in which our students turn to those who have trodden the same path earlier – their seniors!

In their own words...

“Them and Us”: Alumni’s Mode of Contact with the Students

Though some amount of interaction exists between students of all the batches of the Institute, it is a common consensus that the highest level of interaction exists between students of consecutive batches. Hence, the greatest amount of contact of current students is with recently passed out students.

Most of the alumni contact students to know about the happenings going on in the Institute like how the festivals such as Antaragni and Techkriti are being organized, what are their juniors involved in, new research developments and many other things. In fact, even after passing out many seniors make it a point to come back to campus to witness Antaragni. And the alumni connect themselves to the Institute through the clubs they were part of and the sports teams by constantly enquiring about the status of these activities in the Institute. Mostly these alumni are those who have been previously connected with these Institute level activities and are interested to know about the changes in pattern associated with these events.

One important aspect that the students notice in the alumni-student interaction is the hall with which that particular alumnus has been associated. Students in the final year feel that the Hall culture certainly reflects in their interaction with the seniors and they immediately come to know whether they are talking to a guy of their hall or not. Though they also pointed out that this thing also depended on that particular alumni, on whether his hall feelings have moderated or he still considers them to be important.

Alumni prove to be a link to the outside world for the students in IIT Kanpur. They play an important role in arranging sponsorships for various Institute level festivals and providing references to various companies for placements in IIT Kanpur. The alumni are of particular help to students applying for internships; they usually help them in reviewing their resume, point out their mistakes and shortcomings, and also tell them about all the do’s and don’ts that they must follow at their internships and their interviews. In most companies Alumni have made it a tradition to meet the student who is on an intern and also have a get together. Alumni of a particular department also help in keeping the institute informed about various developments concerning the affairs of that particular department.

When it comes specifically to UG students’ interaction with the alumni, basically everyone is of the view that the seniors whom they interact with during the initial interaction period are the ones who are in personal contact even after they pass out of the Institute. Students stress powerfully that whatever personal relations they have with seniors were mostly initiated during the first month interaction in their first year and are concerned that this trend is declining due to lack of interaction in the succeeding batches.

And the way students approach alumni varies from the 1st year to 4th year. 1st and 2nd years look towards the Alumni for inspirations and are interested in hearing from them. A large turnout of 1st years, for example, was witnessed in the talks given by Dr.Narayanmoorthy, Harsh Mangalik and Dr.Bhaskar Pramanik. These junior students, however, are rather reluctant to take the step forward to interact with them. In the 4th year, on the other hand, students actively seek out their immediate seniors for professional guidance and for understanding how the professional world

works. 3rd and 4th years, in fact, look up to the Alumni with whom they may not even be in personal touch while taking crucial decisions about internships and jobs, and ultimately get good advice from them. Also, quite a large number of student volunteers are involved in the Alumni Reunions held during December and January where they get ample scope to interact with the Alumni and also form good relationships that continue much beyond reunion festivities.

During these reunions Alumni make it a point to visit their Halls and interact with the students about their hostel and campus life. They even visit their rooms and interact with the occupants. Some immediate pass-outs visit their halls and interact with the juniors in the Quads about their IITK experiences and the things which went right and wrong with them.

Alumni interaction with students actually begins even before IITK students first come to IITK. In many cities, alumni organize camps and get-togethers during June and July, after JEE results have been announced, to provide these prospective IIT students with a foretaste of what is to come. Some alumni have even started visiting JEE preparation classes to give motivational talks and practical tips about what it means to be an IITian.

And so, from the time a student starts preparing for JEE to the time the student finally leaves IITK, alumni act as a consistent source of support and inspiration for the IITK junta. No wonder then that as far as IITK students are concerned...

"Alumni of IITK are the bedrock of all its facilities"