

The Bangalore Convention

19 – 20th June 2010

The Bangalore convention was the first major convention off-campus. The main focus of the convention was “Igniting Innovation” at IITK and in the country and “Building Bridges” between the alumni and their alma mater, to create a vibrant innovation ecosystem. Nearly 600 delegates from across the world, including alumni, IITK faculty members, ex-faculty members, families and distinguished guests from corporate, academia and government institutions participated in the event. To give the alumni the feel of entering IITK, a huge replica of the IITK Gate was created at the entrance of the convention hall and this triggered reminiscence of their days at the institute during the convention. The highlights of the convention included:

1. Spurring Innovation in IIT education
2. Next50 Innovation Challenge
3. Discussion on Vision 2020
4. Celebration of the achievements of ‘unsung alumni heroes’
5. Loads of nostalgia!

After the inaugural ceremony Mr. Rakesh Pandey, Alumni Association President, welcomed the audience and spoke about the role of alumni in shaping the future of IITK and called for more active alumni participation. He requested the audience to give a standing ovation to all the ‘guruji’s who are the real pillars of an institution. The nostalgic highlight of his address was the felicitation given to him in the traditional IITK way with ‘golden bumps’ on the stage! After this Prof. Sanjay G. Dhande addressed the audience and spoke about the achievements of the past, the status of the present, and the plans for the future. Prof. Dhande emphasized the need for IITK to go borderless and set-up extension and research centers outside Kanpur, even outside the country. He said that this will promote R&D capabilities of IITK at international level, and move IITK forward in competing and excelling at international levels.

The next speaker, Mr. Kris Gopalakrishnan (CEO of Infosys) gave the inaugural keynote address on behalf of Mr. N. R. Narayana Murthy (MT/EE/69), as he could not make it to the convention. Addressing the gathering Mr. Gopalakrishnan said that innovation should be embraced as a culture in academic institutions. He said that establishing a

research park triggers the process of innovation and suggested that we must “break the rules to innovate”. According to him, while IITK celebrates the 50th anniversary, what is more important is what’s next! IITK must think and do things differently and innovate. He exhorted the alumni to visit their alma mater regularly to keep in touch and support the institution in every possible way.

This was followed by an inspiring innovation panel discussion, led by Prof. Ashok Jhunjhunwala (BT/EE/75) and with eminent innovation leaders as panelists such as Dr. Ashok Misra (BT/CHE/72), Prof. Jitendra Malik (BT/EE/80), Mr. Rajeev Chawla (BT/EE/84), Mr. Naveen Tiwari (BT/ME/01), Prof. Ramadhar Singh (former faculty member, Department of Humanities and Social Sciences) and Mr. Shantanu Agrawal (BT-MT-Duel/ME/09 and IITK Jugnu team member). The panel came up with several suggestions on how to make the IIT system more innovative and what it needs to focus on to become a top class research institute in the world. These recommendations will be incorporated in the IITK Vision 2020 for implementation.

Later in the day there were talks and discussions on IIT Kanpur Vision 2020, which was the focus of the Bangalore Convention. Vision 2020 is a draft document developed jointly by alumni and faculty to set the vision for IITK for the next decade and beyond. On 18th June, a day before the actual convention, McKinsey presented their findings and recommendations to the Vision 2020 Steering Committee. These were evaluated and included in the Vision 2020 roadmap which Dr. Manindra Agrawal (BT/PhD/CSE/86/92) presented the next day. He (figuratively) wore two hats – one as a faculty member and the other as an alumnus, and articulated the vision from both perspectives. The session was moderated by Mr. Jeet Bindra (BTech/CHE/69). The alumni showed enthusiastic support and involvement by making many suggestions and asking questions that were answered by the Vision 2020 team on the panel, including Mr. Rakesh Pandey (BT/ME/78), Mr. Abhay Bhushan (BT/EE/65) and Mr. Praveen Tripathi (BT/EE/77).

Following the discussions on Vision 2020, there was the announcement of the winners of the Next50 Innovation Challenge. The Next50 Innovation Challenge attracted over 100 business plans from top early stage innovators from around the world. The challenge focused on five themes: Agriculture, Clean Technologies, Education, Financial Inclusion, and Technology. The top five innovations were chosen from amongst these

and were awarded at the convention by corporate sponsors and innovation leaders. The Next50 can be seen at <http://www.onebillionminds.com/category/project/next50>.

The day culminated in a musical evening, an event that was coordinated and handled to perfection by our alumni, followed by a semi-professional band from another alumni-duo Saikat-Shankar. It is interesting to note that these alumni collaborated and practiced over the internet to rehearse! Spirits soared high with a mix of melodies from the past decades and enthusiastic junta dancing in the aisles. Mr. Abhay Bhushan was the cynosure of all eyes with his terrific dance moves.

On the second day several working group sessions with the focus on innovation in IIT Kanpur, were held and were attended by more than 180 participants. The discussions centred around the different aspects of Vision 2020 - Excellence in Research, Academia-Industry Connect, Academia-Society Connect, Innovation Center, and most importantly, Alumni Connect. The members who took part in these discussions were Prof. Anil Gupta (IIM Ahmedabad and Executive Vice Chair, National Innovation Foundation), Prof. Balram (Director, IISc Bangalore), Prof. Sangal (Director, IIIT Hyderabad), Prof. Ashok Misra (Chairman, Intellectual ventures India), Mr. T. C. Meenakshisundaram (founding Managing Director of IDG Ventures India), Mr. Jeet Bindra (President, Chevron Global Manufacturing), Mr. Saurabh Srivastava (Chairman of CA Technologies, India), Mr. Rajeev Chawla (secretary for e-Governance for the state of Karnataka)and Mr. R. K. Misra (founder SAHYOG - Indian Council for Public Private Partnership).