

BITS ECHO



PILANI | DUBAI | GOA | HYDERABAD

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BITS

SU LEADERS

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Disclaimer : The information contained in this publication is sourced from alumni and reflects their views and opinions, and not of the institute.





Dear BITSians,

I am extremely pleased to share that after a long gap, we have started having students back on our campuses in a phased manner! We are gradually moving from online to hybrid to completely offline instruction and assessment. At present all HD, PhD and some FD batches have reported and started attending classes physically. New batch also admitted and started online classes, but will be brought to campus shortly. However, Dubai campus operated with hybrid mode last session and continuing this semester also with more students on the campus. I hope that with collective efforts and prayers "normalcy will be a norm" in the world soon.

We always take a great pride in your achievements and success. The industry sees a distinct value in BITS Pilani graduates and thus hiring from our campuses – this combined with the excellent education, an incomparable campus life, and our placement team's consistent efforts, QS has ranked us amongst the Top 250-300 universities in the world in its Graduate Employability Ranking 2021. We look forward to deeper engagement with you in our endeavours to improve our ranking even further.

Do reach out to Prof. Arya Kumar and his team if you are interested in supporting great careers for your juniors, practice school programs and contributing back in other ways.

As the campuses are returning to normalcy, we hope that we restart the tradition of celebrating reunions of the batches soon, and take the trip down the memory lane, literally.

Stay safe!

Prof R N Saha
Acting Vice-Chancellor



Dear BITSians

I am delighted to take up stewardship of BITS Pilani, Dubai, as its new Director. It is indeed a privilege to be associated with a premier institution with a vibrant intellectual environment and an extensive and distinguished alumni network. The differentiating feature of BITS Pilani is that alumni are every bit as engaged with the mission and vision of the institution as the students, staff, faculty, and the leadership. In the new world order brought about by COVID, the tenets of BITS Pilani become even more important as we continue our pursuit of excellence in science and technology.

In particular, the capacity and capability-building activities of BITS Pilani are well-aligned with the upsurge in interest and demand for e-commerce services, prophylactic medical technologies in response to the global pandemic, data-based decision making, IoT, bespoke manufacturing, etc. Furthermore, powered by its inter-campus connectivity, BITS has demonstrated its resilience

and adaptability to new challenges by seamlessly transitioning to online and blended modes of learning and is well-positioned to lay the pathway for future evolutions.

Your contributions and roles – both global and regional – in these initiatives and endeavors are critical and your facilitation and inputs will help us stay at the forefront. With a focus on exporting a world-class education system, strategic research, and growth in entrepreneurship, I will take the liberty of seeking your strong support and counsel to position BITS Pilani, Dubai as the leading contributor to a knowledge-based economy in the greater Middle East.

Prof. Srinivasan Madapusi
Director, Dubai Campus



Dear Fellow BITSians,

In March 2020, while the world had come to a standstill, the BITSian spirit had not! From the very start of the pandemic, BITSians have come to the aid of each other for several causes. If anything, COVID-19 has shown us how resilient the most close-knit BITS alumni network in the world truly is! In the past 15 months, I've had the opportunity to lead one of the significant campaigns in this process, for the BITSAA Daily wagers COVID-19 support. Together, across two big campaigns each in 2020 and 2021, we had raised 80+ lakhs INR in a short span. This is being used to provide monthly rations and cash support to over 150 beneficiaries for over a year now, across 3 campuses (Pilani, Goa, and Hyderabad) including *rediwalas*, washermen/washerwomen, and few others who we lovingly called "*didi*" and "*bhaiyya*" on campus. This is besides the continued

ongoing support we have been receiving for merit-cum-need scholarships and other student initiatives, which has been another important element as we know so many families have suffered financially during this time of crisis. Besides scholarships, we also supported students via smaller adhoc initiatives such as "Digital Divide", where we helped students struggling with laptop issues (and having dire financial circumstances) by arranging spare laptops via alumni in the same city; as well as those in remote areas with weak connectivity struggling to write online tests, for whom we provided satellite devices for better internet access. None of this would have been possible without the deep sense of belonging and care we have for every BITSian and the love for our cumulative BITSian family! I salute the BITSian spirit of giving and feel proud to be a part of the team at BITSAA International, which inspires me every single day!

Divya Nawale
Director, Fundraising, BITSAA Foundation

BITS SU Leaders Soaring High in the Sky

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f the college life offers us a little more than formal education by providing us opportunities to expand our creative potential, it is in fact helping us become individuals with unique traits. In addition to excelling in academics, some BITSians have contributed substantially to the well-being of the student communities by actively engaging in student politics. This issue of BITS Echo celebrates this all-round development of BITSians who cared as much for the communities of students as their own. It shares with you the stories, struggles and experiences of some of Presidents and the Vice Presidents of the Student Union Council whose efforts are worth remembering.



Pioneer at Hyderabad Campus A Leader in True Sense

Chaitanya JV (Hyd, '12) was the first Student Union President at BITS Pilani, Hyderabad Campus. He shares about being the first SU president, the responsibility that came with it and how it changed his life for the better. He shares how he managed to layout the steps on which the future batches could follow and help the students. At present, he is the Chief Experience Officer, Gottlitchdesign.

We were the first batch to have a Student Union President. So it was our responsibility to set the layout for future Student Unions and make it easier for them. I never thought about setting an example because it was more about setting the precedence in place because we had no prior batch to guide us. We got help from student welfare and faculty who helped us understand how a student body functions. We wanted to catch up with Pilani and Goa campuses, who'd been running longer than the Hyderabad campus.

I took the responsibility of as the first SU President mainly because I wanted to develop my personality. To form the clubs at campus, we had to address the batch. I got so nervous that I couldn't keep my word properly before them. After that incident and becoming the SU President, I was truly driven to change personality and myself as a person. Another reason was building connections. As a child, I had to switch a number of schools because my father was in civil services. So I never had good friends until college. I realised that being the SU President would give a great chance to build connections with diverse people and this became another reason for me to stand for the elections.

As a President, my first goal was establishing SOPs and the framework and activities to be conducted, layout the path for conducting the 1st fest and laying out the agenda for the coming years to conduct tech fest, the sports fest and all of that.

First year was a mix of both - we had to teach people how to decentralise, all the while keeping ourselves in control. Another agenda in my manifesto was to revoke the attendance system that did not fall under the true BITSian spirit. The students did not like it because it did not give the students the freedom as was given to the students of Pilani and the Goa campuses. That was eventually taken away once we tried talking to the senate.

An important skill that being the President I picked up was taking calculative risk and managing them. All other kinds of skills like communication skills, the spirit of working in a team, and managing tasks can be learned through some way. But the skill of taking a calculative skill only comes with being a leader.

One thing that I'd like to advise the students would be to be open to experience a variety of things. Explore the varied industries, understand their functioning and how they work. BITS gives its students the freedom to think what's best for them and utilise your time at BITS to the best of your ability.

Satisfying & Huge Learning Experience!

Pioneers of Organising OASIS Fest!



Mr. Indrajit Sen (Pilani, '76) is a certified, Professional Independent Director; Business, Brand & Marketing Consultant. Here, he recalls incidents when he was the General Secretary for the Student Union; he shares his experiences of organizing for the first time ever the most popular OASIS.

What motivated you to stand as a candidate for the student council president?

I was the General Secretary of what was called BITS student union back in the day. I was active in various extracurricular activities such as debating, dramatics, English Literature society and BITS-BEAT; I also played an active role in the Student Union elections. As such, my close friends and I developed a sense of how to organize the landmark and the trend setter events. One thing led to another, and there I was a candidate for the post of GS for 1973-1974. I was supported by all the hostels, across the years and the streams.

Unity is a major skill that a leader requires. How challenging was it for you to maintain unity amongst your team?

It was challenging to get everyone to agree to a plan and execute it. And at all times, the factor of unity was achieved through personal interactions with all key persons involved, successfully selling my ideas to them. Accommodating others' ideas was an important part of managing the entire community. And united as a team, we were able to successfully execute all our plans—

even the events that weren't in our plan, but developed circumstantially.

Please share anecdotes or some incident while you were a member of the student union.

The most satisfying experience was organizing OASIS for the very first-time as a 'national' cult-fest attended by students from colleges all over the country. Creating an environment of perfect hospitality that would become a point of publicity for BITS for subsequent years, was very challenging. Even the trophies for this first OASIS were designed and developed by students at CRAC Center under the guidance of Prof. BK Raghunath. The trophy was modelled as a stylized version of Goddess Saraswati- our campus inspiration. One time, due to some incidents and circumstances, we got the chance to meet our esteemed Chairperson, Shri G D Birla ji and his senior advisors. The profound impact those meetings had on me and others is difficult to explain. Through those meetings, we learnt humility, not misusing one's position, maintaining dignity and accepting differing points of view. For all of us in the student council, it taught us life lessons and shaped our character, personality and behaviour, which are all everlasting.



Memoirs of a President

Yashoraj Tyagi (Goa, '13), the Chief Technology Officer at CASHe, was the President of the Council of Student Affairs during 2015-2016. As a tech savvy himself, he shares how his approach to decision making and being transparent and patient during difficult times paid rich dividends in the long run.

What was the reason you wanted to be the Council of Student Affairs President?

Before contesting for the post of the President of the student council, as the head of the ENI Association, I was involved in starting technology mentorship initiatives. The success of those made me believe that there was a lot of white space in terms of accelerating the tech culture of the campus through large-scale grassroots level initiatives.

The next logical step for me was the student council President, through which one could implement such initiatives. The technology leader background and the support of the students cutting across batches made me confident to run for the President. I wanted to put the campus on a fast track towards having a world class technology innovation and development culture - the likes of which you see in organisations such as MIT Media Labs

How did you tackle decisions when your opinion contrasted with the majority opinion of the general body?

After becoming the President, one of the many things I quickly realized was that not all right decisions are popular and not all popular decisions are right in the long run. After winning the elections, one has to understand that the student body has entrusted you with the responsibility of doing the right things for the campus community. I had to take some decisions that wouldn't go down well with the students. During such times, I practiced being absolutely transparent, open and fair in terms of the reasons behind taking certain decisions, and their impact on the general body. When people understand the rationale behind implementing a decision, they support you wholeheartedly.

What skills did you develop as the President? Did these help you later in life?

After becoming the President, I learnt a lot of intangible skills that continue to help me even today. It taught me the skills of managing people, teams, finances and other resources, within very tight constraints. More than anything, it taught me the importance of being a good listener and the importance of being flexible with my own point of view.

Being the CTO of a mid-sized company, these skills come into play when you have to be extremely adept with managing people and resources and driving them towards collective goals. Most importantly, the ups and downs of this role made me learn the importance of being unaltered in moving towards the goals, irrespective of the circumstances.



BITS does it like no other Institute!

Revolutionary changes happened in 2016-2017

Sarthak Singh (Goa, '14) was the President of the Council of Student Affairs for the year 2016-2017. He shares how impressed he was with the work done by the Council for Student Affairs. At present, he is an Investment Professional at Info Edge Ventures and still applies the skills he developed as the President for the CSA.

When I visited the campus, I saw that the beautiful tranquil leafy campus had it all—a beach nearby, multiple food outlets, vibrant culture and a beautiful common. When I started meeting people, I was surprised to hear the innovative ideas they had. But along with the ideas, they also had complaints. I figured out later that majority of the things that looked appealing, like television sets in common rooms, were all because of the efforts by the Council for Student Affairs. I am very proud of all the changes that the Council for Student Affairs and the SWD were able to pull off during the tenure. We got the girls curfew revamped, sent students to Dubai for the International BITS Dubai event, and importantly, made efforts to make the campus cashless before Demonetization happened. BITS Goa and the student body has always been ahead of the curve when it comes to adoption of the best policies. Back then, none of these looked like a big feat but in hindsight, they do. BITS empowers its student council like no other university does. It has to be mentioned that CSA helped me a lot during my tenure as the President for the Council for Student Affairs. Today, during most of the negotiations that I do in my everyday life as young Venture Capitalist, I am often asked about my skill development. Undoubtedly, I attribute much of my learning to the vibrant student community which always kept me on toes. I have managed election campaigns for Cabinet Ministers, worked with the Government. But in a true sense, there is no better democracy than what BITS has to offer. For any student who's caught in the dilemma whether he should stand for the elections or not, my advice to them is, Just Go Ahead because all of it is going to be worth it.

Righting the Wrong

Raghu Ram Salguti (Hyd, '09) is an Associate Director in the Consulting Division at HighRadius. After graduating, he started his career as a Software Engineer. With the team of BITS Echo, he shares why he stood up for the role of a Student Union President, how he diligently fulfilled his responsibilities while sharing his observations about the importance of team work.



If it was not to correct the mistakes committed during the execution and planning of the cultural festival, Pearl, the thought to contest for the student council President would not have occurred. The cultural festival in 2010 was a financial mess, and I wanted to do it all over again and execute it better. I didn't know if people looked up to me or not, but one thing I'd like to say is that standing for the student council President was one of the best decisions I made, and need I say what a great experience it was! It wasn't, however, easy for me being the President because of the stage fright I had. Campaigning itself was challenging for me. But, through my tenure of being the President, I became confident, thanks to the numerous speeches I had to give.

Being the President, I learnt the lesson that if you want to do great things, you need to work collectively as a team and not alone. My entire campaign was, in fact, about an idea and not about a person. Moreover, the satisfaction felt after achieving a community goal was something I felt for the first time.

During my tenure, we successfully organized a cultural festival that brought profits. This feat meant a lot for us, especially after the debacle from the previous year. It was one of the highlights of my time there and it obviously took a village for the success of the festival. The feeling of sharing that experience with numerous other organizers was a feeling I'd never felt before.

It just had to happen!

George Manoj (Dubai, '14) is an Order Management Specialist at Emerson Automation Solutions. He was the Student Council President during 2017-2018. Below he talks about how he was able to accomplish the dreams that he along with his seniors and juniors envisioned while at the campus.



What motivated you to stand as a candidate for the student council president?

At BITS Pileri, Dubai campus, I looked up to my seniors for inspiration. While the professors guided me and support me ensuring that I stay focused towards my career, it was my seniors whose work ethics and dedication of giving back to the university really inspired me. I joined various organizations and clubs to help different causes led by our seniors. One cause led to the other and I then decided to stand for the student council President. I knew I had to be as efficient as I could be to make all the dreams come true.

What would you say to someone who intends to run for the post now?

The answer lies in the observation that between yourself and the student body of BPDC, who do you wish to see as the president. If the answer is yourself, then you better work for your cause before you run for the President. However, if you genuinely work and wish to serve the college in the best possible manner and choose the student body of BPDC, then your cause will be recognized and you will be successful.

What did the experience of being a student council President teach you?

How valuable were those lessons after you graduated?

The biggest lesson I learnt being the student council President was 'Team Work makes Dream Work'. The experiences taught me that anything is possible if a group of people strongly believe in a collective vision.

In 2018, we had 80 representatives of the student body of the BITS Pileri's Dubai campus. Need I say that the projects we accomplished were nothing short of a miraculous.

At present, I'm part of the Diversity and Inclusion Council at my workplace, displaying the same concepts of courage and togetherness. These were the two main lessons I learnt during my days on the campus.

Trailblazer at Dubai Campus

First Female VP, Definitely not The Last



Shraddha Shetty (Dubai, '15) was the first female Vice President of the Student Council during 2017-2018 at BITS Dubai campus. She shares her experiences of being the VP and the challenges that came with it.

After holding multiple club positions in the institute, in my third year, I decided to stand for the student council elections as the Vice President. Being a student body representative was neither new nor intimidating to me; however, each time was a new experience that came with its own pain points and learning opportunities. This one was no different. I was the first female Vice President of BITS, and I was up for the challenge.

The first challenge I had to overcome lied ahead of me even before my tenure began. It was to prove to the entire student body that I was worth it; and it's not a fun experience. I was questioned, pushed away, loved and welcomed, all at the same time. It took a whole lot to process such varied emotions. But the students trusted me, and I hope I did good by them. An individual doesn't become a leader just because they've got a higher hierarchical position. What makes a true leader is personality, work ethic, people skills, presence of mind and decision-making capability. The leadership position promises you authority and exposure, but what one does with it promises one's success. As I'm writing this article sitting in a café on the other side of the world, I recall several anecdotes from BITS. The experience made me stronger than I ever was.

I believe that leadership is a practice not defined by positions of authority. I'm still the same Shraddha who is constantly running around, interacting with new people with a smile on her face. In the grand scheme of things, BITS was a part of my life; being a BITSian or being in the student council didn't change me drastically. If anything, it helped me understand where I should be headed next to.



“Month Long Festival!”

Anup Munshi (Pilani, '72) was the General Secretary for the Student Union at BITS Pilani. At present, he is the Managing Director of Aushyan Marketing Pvt Ltd where he gives corporate training, educational counseling and provides coaching for professionals. He goes down the memory lane reliving his past and shares his experiences at student council elections, his manifesto, and the role his friends played.

I was the General Secretary for the Student Union between 1974-75. It was my friends, who pumped me up to stand for the elections because they thought I had a good chance of winning it. I also thought that it was a good chance to experience the whole gamut of elections because of the excitement I had witnessed during the previous elections. The duties and the responsibilities that came with being a part of the students' union were other factors that motivated me to stand for the elections.

In those days, student elections were fought with fierce fervor and seriousness. Posters, sloganeering and speeches were all part of the sort of a month-long furious activity. It was a humungous task to go to every hostel and campaigning for yourself, making speeches and talking about your manifesto. All the candidates would have their hostel groups and friends working on election strategies, logistics, manifesto and the speeches. Those were, indeed, exciting times! During these elections, what mattered the most was the relations you'd developed throughout the first two years of your hostel life, especially with seniors. Another was your intention and the manifesto. The issues addressed during the student union meetings would all be related to the students. One of the issues we managed to address was the cross-functional problems. For instance, a pharmacy student would have to study a thermodynamics course. There was a possibility that some students would fail in it. After discussions with the academic board, it was resolved by bringing in an E-grade instead of an F-grade. E-Grade meant that you were exposed to the subject and F-grade meant you wouldn't have to repeat the subject despite failing. We were also active in mess-related activities.

We always approached the issues with 'all would be well'. By addressing the issues collectively, we managed to resolve many typically student issues, such as the opposition on nominating somebody on the sports committee or on the academic board. Some issues we intervened included the appointment of BITS Beat or Rachna editor, guides and team in charge for visiting colleges, especially the girls colleges like Miranda house, DSW Delhi etc. Discussions and negotiations helped to deal with different incidents!

I remember one avoidable ugly episode which happened during the annual festival, where various colleges had come to participate. Everybody was shocked seeing it happen. As the hosts, we quick acted on it and brought both parties together.

During our days, the ratio of female students to male students was very low, if I remember correctly 32 girls in all and around 1800 boys! However, we had no option but to visit Meera Bhavan since a lot of votes depended on the Meera Bhavan opinion! It was great fun, especially for the candidates support members, who would accompany; of course, that would be an excuse for them to visit Meera Bhavan.

To anybody who wishes to stand in the student union elections, I strongly recommend they must go ahead. It is a great learning experience and confidence builder; it also develops one's interpersonal relations with others.



Reinstate Campus's Position Sneak peek into the Presidency of BITS

Akshan Mehta (Dubai, '16) was the Student Council President during 2015-16. At present, he is Senior Purchasing Specialist at Lenovo. Here he talks about the changes he along with his team of Student Council were able to bring in, and what those changes meant for the entire BITS Pilani, Dubai campus.

What was the main agenda you had taken up then, which you feel has reaped fruits for generations that came after you?

I had 2 main agendas. First was regaining BITS Pilani, Dubai Campus's popularity in the UAE via our annual sports, cultural & technical events. The combined efforts of student council, clubs and associations, the sports council and the event management committee made this possible. We finally organised an outdoor event with maximum participation from the country. Numerous alumni turned out who in their words mentioned they had not seen a festival of such magnitude at the campus in a while. Companies were more interested in partnering with the Dubai campus for increasing their exposure among the student population. My second agenda was improving the quality of life at the campus. It was an ongoing project from the previous SU. It was approved and implemented to full functionality in two years. We extended it by improving sports facilities as well by introducing turf grounds, running track and tennis courts. Thanks to the Director and the management, all these facilities were available to the students eventually.

How did you overcome the challenges you faced during your tenure?

The main challenge I faced was raising funds for organising the events. The companies didn't find the right value in sponsoring for university events and

the poor economic state then added to the disadvantage. We then attracted the local businesses by providing each of them special benefits and by accepting in-kind sponsorships too. We offered them to add special segment to an event of their choice promoting their firm. Through this, we attracted many popular companies and secured TV and Radio sponsorships. We gained popularity to an extent that Sony Music India decided to promote their upcoming artists at our event on their dime.

What would you say to someone who intends to run for the post now?

Anyone who wants to run for this post must ensure that during their tenure they take a few steps in making the university a better place. There may be times when their agenda might not be achieved, but this shouldn't stop them from working hard. There are two parts of every agenda, a long term one, the baton of which is passed onto the next student council and the smaller one that can help the students on the campus. During my tenure, I learned management, which is extremely helpful in professional journey. Once graduated, alumni should be the first point of contact in the outside world because they're always happy to guide, advice and assist. Other than monetary help, there are different ways of approaching any company to partner with them. They don't expect you to be perfect but will guide you to be successful.

BITSoM Starts its First Academic Session



BITSoM, the new age business school in Mumbai, under the aegis of BITS Pilani started its very first academic session in July with its Founding Class. BITSoM is driven by the spirit of excellence and the entrepreneurial culture that your alma mater has cultivated over more than five decades. To help establish this culture at BITSoM, the School draws on the illustrious BITS Pilani Alumni for its Governing Council. Led by Mr Kumar Mangalam Birla, Chancellor of BITS Pilani, the council includes BITSians Mr Hari Menon (Founder and CEO, BigBasket.com), Mr Preetish Nijhawan (Co-founder and Partner, Cervin Partners), Dr Rajagopal Raghunathan (Professor of Business, University of Texas Austin), Ms Revathi Advaiti (CEO, Flex) and Dr SP Kothari (Professor of Accounting and Finance, MIT Sloan School of Management) among others.

Over the last three months, we have received overwhelmingly positive feedback from the students on the quality of the faculty and the learning experience. This is a strong endorsement of our core proposition – high quality teaching, an industry oriented and digitally elevated curriculum with a diverse and bright class of students as the right ingredients to turn out high performance, and high potential leaders.

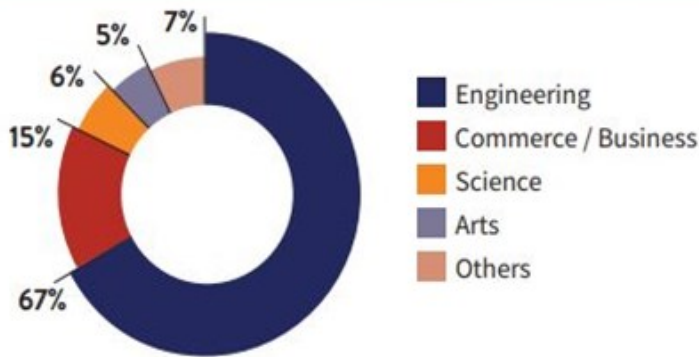
Admissions for the class of 2022 are now open. If any of your family members, friends or acquaintances are keen on pursuing an MBA at BITSoM, please do ask them to visit our website on www.bitsom.edu.in.

About the Founding Class:

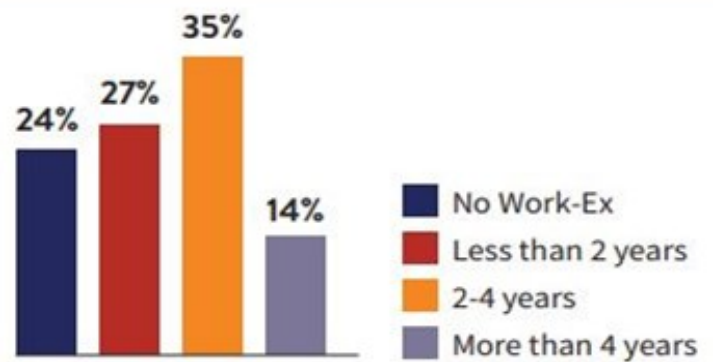
BITSoM's founding class of 140 is a mix of bright young minds who have been handpicked through a rigorous selection process, with a focus on academic excellence, diversity in academic background and work experience, and extra-curricular achievements in addition to standardised test scores. The class is made up of young achievers from diverse fields. We are proud to have an international level swimmer, the winner of the Rausing prize for best dissertation, the winner of the HackHarvard 2019 global hackathon, a movie scriptwriter, and a published author.

Almost half of the students have worked for two or more years with top companies such as Amazon, Boston Consulting Group, Deloitte, Ernst & Young, Morgan Stanley, TCS, and ZS Associates across more than 20 industries. The founding class come from a wide range of top-tier global and Indian universities.

ACADEMIC BACKGROUND



WORK-EX DISTRIBUTION



International Universities

- University of Warwick
- New York University (Abu Dhabi)
- Pennsylvania State University
- McGill University

Indian Institutes

Top Engineering Institutes

- BITS Pilani
- IIT, Madras
- IIT, Roorkee
- IIT, Gandhinagar
- VIT, Vellore
- NIT Surathkal
- VNIT Nagpur
- Delhi Technological University
- VJTI, Mumbai

Top Non-Engineering Institutes

- St. Xavier's College, Mumbai
- Jesus and Mary College, Delhi
- Gargi College, Delhi
- Christ University
- NMIMS, Mumbai
- SRM University
- St. Xavier's College, Kolkata
- HR College of Commerce
- Shaheed Sukhdev College of Business Studies, Delhi

The founding class come from a wide range of top-tier global as well as Indian universities.

The BITSOM Learning Experience:

BITSOM's Orientation week starting 5th July was inaugurated by the Chancellor, Mr. Birla. This was followed by the commencement of academic classes in the block teaching format where each course is taught over a block of two weeks. Each block has only two courses taught at a time – one from the core curriculum, and one from the Winning at the Workplace (WAW) curriculum. Block teaching allows for an intense and immersive learning experiences allowing students to focus with fewer distractions compared to conventional course formats.

The Core courses at BITSOM elevate the disciplines of management with design thinking, analytics and technology. For example, the marketing specialisation will include digital marketing and analytics, the finance specialisation will include a course in fin-tech, and the would be consultants will take a course in the Digital Transformation of Businesses.

This is balanced with the WAW courses that focus on developing students' soft skills and EQ. WAW is designed to help prepare them as self-aware, balanced, and mature leaders. Students will take courses such as Wellbeing and Success, Learning Agility, Working in Teams, Influence and Persuasion, Ethics in Management, Grit and Resilience, and Personal Growth and Transformation. The WAW courses will round off the curriculum with courses on essential workplace skills such as Presentation Skills, Problem Solving, and Project Management

The founding class is now into the 6th block and nearing the end of Term 1. The six blocks have seen the students learn from our star faculty –

- Ranjan Banerjee, Dean, BITSOM
- Rajagopal Raghunathan from University of Texas at Austin
- Luis Martins from University of Texas at Austin
- Ziv Katalan from Wharton Business School,
- Mark Finn from Kellogg School of Management

- Shamika Ravi, a former member of the Prime Minister's Economic Advisory Council among others.

A few of the faculty members who will be teaching the upcoming courses are:

- Leena Chatterjee, Professor of Organisational Behaviour, BITSOM
- Cait Lambertson, Professor of Marketing, Wharton Business School
- Milind Shrikhande, Professor of Finance, Georgia State University
- Morgen Witzel, Fellow, University of Exeter Business School
- Nirmalya Kumar, Professor of Marketing, Singapore Management University
- Soumitra Dutta, Professor of Management, S C Johnson College of Business, Cornell
- Vera Tilson, Associate Professor of Operations, University of Rochester

The school has instituted a series of conversations with renowned business leaders to help students supplement academic learning and be inspired by their real-life experiences and wisdom. Leaders who have delivered talks since commencement are:

- Dr Ajit Ranade, Chief Economist, Aditya Birla Group
- Vivek Sunder, CEO, Cuemath
- Heidi Roizen, Partner, Threshold Ventures – Ms Roizen featured in a case study that the students took, and they then took the initiative to reach out to her and organise the talk.
- Piyush Gupta, Chief Executive Officer, DBS Group
- Barnik Chitran Maitra, Managing Partner & CEO of Arthur D Little, India and South Asia

While students cope with the academic rigor of online classes, business simulations, and group studies, they have still found ways to keep their passions alive. They have constituted a range of student-led clubs and committees – Consulting, Analytics, Social impact and Sustainability, Sports & Fitness, Photography, Public speaking, and Shelf indulgence (book club), to name a few.

The Code to Moscow

ICPC was the Ultimate Goal



Ashish Gupta (Hyderabad, '16) is working with Google and is a part of the first and only team from the campus to qualify for the ICPC world finals. Below are a few excerpts from our conversation in which we explore the journey that inspires upcoming competitive coders across campuses.

Thanks to my dad who talked highly of Computer Science, I got interested in the field very young. I spent a lot of my childhood playing games and exploring the internet. However, I was introduced to competitive coding during an orientation by our seniors in my freshman year. The challenge by my seniors to reach the level of BITSians who reached the Candidate Master level on Codeforces and worked for Google, piqued my interest and I started exploring Competitive Coding. I enjoyed logical problem solving puzzles and riddles, and having a good understanding of the nature of mathematics involved.

The friendly competition we had in our friend circle kept us all motivated, all the while enjoying what we were doing and creating memories along the way. From taking part in contests competing against each other, to discussing the solution or various approaches to a problem, it was a fun experience.

Reaching the ICPC was our dream. It is one of the few major contests held worldwide where reaching the finals is a very realistic goal for Indians. I say this because children in other countries are encouraged to start coding at a very young age, and events like Facebook Hacker Cup and Google Code Jam are individual events - where there is no country-wise quota. No Indian has qualified for their World Finals in the last 5+ years. Moreover, even reaching the regionals meant that you get to travel to various Indian cities and meet the top Indian coders. It was all really exciting.

The fact that our team qualified for the World Finals was made sweeter by the fact that we had lost all hopes of qualifying. The finals would be held at Moscow this year, and since none of us has ever been abroad, it would be a new and exciting experience for us. We are really looking forward to meeting best competitive coders across the world. Having followed their progress motivated us and some of them are also our role models.

My advice to the young BITSians is to figure out what you wish to do. Once you find your area of interest, put your time into it - it is always better to have a good grasp and understanding of a particular field or topic, than to know various fields superficially. You should reach out to anyone that you'd like to learn from because there are high chances you will find a few friends along the way. To that end, almost all of my friends are people I met along my Competitive Programming journey - both in college and online.



“We are BITSians”

Abhinav Gupta (Goa, '19) was the pitching Head of the Placement unit and the only person to be re-elected by an 80% majority, as the CSA (Council for Student Affairs) President. He is also the person who led the team that brought the restaurant “Red Chillies” to the campus.

What motivated you to join CSA?

I was shy and an introvert who would prefer a small circle of friends. However, people liked me and considered me a reliable person. When my friends thought I could be a good leader, I wasn't confident initially about it. When I seriously gave it a thought, I realized that it was a position with an exposure that could give one the best opportunity to help others. Yet another motivating factor was the perk of developing one's skills.

What were the challenges you faced during your tenure as the President?

As a President, I faced some challenges. The biggest of all was being held accountable for everything I said and did. I had to maintain transparency in all my decisions. There were times when I had to decide in favor of someone, and against the other. However, I had to make decisions very rationally.

Did it help you in your college and later in life?

In the beginning I had trouble addressing large gatherings. I used to fumble and get nervous. But, with practice, I gained confidence in addressing a gathering eloquently. This position with a lot of exposure, power and responsibility

also helped me understand people better. It taught me how to deal with various situations and people, not by authority, but with support.

Any interesting memories you made while in CSA?

Many! As a President I had a lot of work and a lot of fun. One of the things I promised as President was helping every student get passport. By working closely with the passport office, we managed to help hundreds of students get their passports within a few days. As a student, convincing the RPO was a major achievement. Though everyone has graduated now, my peers still thank me for my efforts back then.

Do you have any message for the present students?

If you ever feel unsure, remember this: You have already proven yourself academically. You are among the best minds in the country and surrounded by the same. If you put your mind to it, you can create opportunities and do anything. Don't limit yourself to the status quo.

Ask yourself, “Why not?” Remember, you are part of a larger community that has built trust for decades. We are BITSians. Trust the BITSians because the world trusts them.

Patience & Prioritization

Explore Fields, to Find Yourself



Satyansh Rai (Pilani, '14) is a former Student Union President. At present, he is working as the Product Strategist for the Buy Now, Pay Later product of PayPal. Satyansh has co-authored research paper 'Visual Question Answer System' based on computer vision and NLP, along with Prof. Lavika Goel at BITS Pilani.

How have all the numerous leadership roles, you played on campus, helped you in your career?

Leadership has evolved me as an individual. Some of most important things I have learnt over the years, while dealing with the students, administration, alumni, chancellor's office and the local people of Pilani, are patience and prioritization. As a leader, you need to hear out and stand with everyone, but execute initiatives that affect the larger mass. The same working pattern helped me become an elected representative for 3 consecutive years.

What advice would you give to the students who are trying to figure their core interests?

Identifying one's interest as a student is one of the toughest challenges. At BITS, we have students and alumni excelling in every field, which makes it even more confusing. To find my interest, I tried to gain experience in every field and accepted or rejected the field based on the experience. I worked as a research intern at DRDO, as a data Scientist for Bajaj Finserv and PayPal, worked on the National AI Strategy at NITI Aayog.

My advice to fellow BITSians is to explore yourself

before choosing the final path. BITS gives us the platform to explore different avenues. Whatever I learnt during the course of my CS degree might not be directly relevant to the things I pursued, but it always gives me the thrust for the next big jump.

Can you share about the changes you brought to the campus?

My tenure was built on students' expectations to bring change for the welfare of the students at BITS, the administration's expectation to bridge the gap between students and the institute, and my personal expectations to break out of the normal routine of SU's work. Many key initiatives that were proposed during my tenure were welcomed by the students and the professors too. Installation of sanitary pad dispensers, the Jawed Habib salon, Amul parlour, 24*7 library, snack vending machines in hostels, passport camp in association with Ministry of External affairs were some prominent initiatives that I and my team worked for. The union also focused on showing the contribution of BITS Pilani on a national level by starting fundraisers for natural calamities, a tradition that still goes on.

The encouragement from the BITS community

helped me move forward and achieve these milestones. Personally, it was the best learning experience BITS offered me.

Could you please share a little about your professional journey and what kept motivated you always?

When I started my internship at NITI Aayog I worked on the National AI Strategy for the Government of India. Here I began working on the AI and ML. Despite it being a consultant role, I got interested in the technical details of AI. Once back to campus after the internship, my CS degree helped me explore DEL's in AI and ML. This further helped me fetch data science internships at Bajaj Finserv and PayPal. Now, I am working as a Product Strategist for the Buy Now, Pay Later product of PayPal, which is also based on the ML concept. This role is suitable for me as it involves decision making and at the same time, I am working on an ML product too.

After working in various domains, what is your plan for the future?

Though I might have planned a lot for my short term goals, but in the long run I am going to join the Indian Politics

CONSISTENCY > HARD WORK

Sidharth Lahoti (Dubai, '17) is the co-founder of Inaara, an online platform to support COVID-19 patients. With the team of BITS Echo, he talks about his startup, the pros and cons of being an entrepreneur, and the qualities required by a person to become a successful entrepreneur.



How did you get your idea for the startup? How did you get started?

During the 1st wave of COVID-19, hospitals across the country started adopting plasma therapy, which helped stabilize the critical condition of the COVID-19 patients. I noticed that while there were eligible plasma donors, the patients found it hard to reach them. To solve this problem, I along with fellow BITSian Srinivas, founded Inaara, an automated online platform that allowed the patients to place requests for plasma to registered donors while keeping their identities private. I launched a volunteer program, seeking help from like-minded people. Within two months, Inaraa was joined by more than 40 volunteers. We partnered with doctors, NGOs, local influencers, and blood banks in 24 Indian cities to organize online awareness campaigns for recovered patients. We started an online challenge on Instagram with the use of an augmented reality filter. Members of the Delhi Government and influencers like Anurag Chauhan representing UNICEF and Humans of Humanity, India, joined us. To date, we have reached more than 75,000 donors through our awareness campaigns and have helped more than 600 patients. We expanded our automated process by running various on-ground events in underdeveloped cities and connected with more than 120 patients. We plan to include an online blood bank and build a WhatsApp chatbot to convince people to find and register as a donor. I am happy to use my marketing and problem-solving skills during these uncertain times and help solve the community problem. The Not-For-Profit start-up was initially bootstrapped and eventually funded by BITSians.

Can you give insights on how budding entrepreneurs could find resources for their start-ups?

Mentorship is the best resource. Entrepreneurs should know the value and skill to network. Many accomplished professionals are more than willing to help. Having a network of more than 80000 alums played a vital role in our story. Other than that, a platform I found pretty helpful was Trailblazer by SAP.

What are the essential traits needed in a person to run a successful startup?

Entrepreneurs are leaders first and then professionals. Having empathy towards the team and the user is very critical for an entrepreneur to grow. One of my senior's advice, 'Opportunities don't happen; you create them', helped me grow a lot. I believe that hard work takes people a long way, but consistency takes you even longer.

What, are the pros and cons of running a business venture?

As an entrepreneur, you get to fuel a great business idea with passion and determination to make life easier for their users. Another perk of being an entrepreneur is that you can set your work hours according to your efficiency. Successful entrepreneurs are often consummate learners, researching the most significant trends in their field and staying on top of great ideas already in the marketplace. Curiosity is a crucial skill for any entrepreneur as it can lead to the next great idea or innovation. Entrepreneurs know that making a change in the world doesn't come from simply doing what's expected or what everyone else is doing. The only con is that you are on a gamble with a lot at risk. But the perception of the people makes a difference. It can be a driving force for one and a point of worry for the other.



Rahul Misra: Jack of All Trades

Rahul Misra, (Pilani, 2000), is a Vice President, Funding & Collateral Optimization Tech at Morgan Stanley FinTech. His role does not end at being the Vice President because he is also a Wimbledon Umpire and a poet. He holds the topmost line umpire grade at Wimbledon and has umpired the matches for the likes of Serena Williams, Roger Federer, Novak Djokovic etc.

Please share about that experience of umpiring at visually impaired tennis event.

event.

Umpiring at a visually impaired tennis event is fairly humbling. The passion and grit with which the players approach the game is something to behold. The ball used in these matches makes a sound when it travels through air or bounces that helps the player follow its path using their sense of hearing. The players ask the umpire which line it missed or whether it went into the net when they hit a fault serve. This way, they map out the court in their minds and adjust their way of playing. In short, it is truly wonderful to see how these people don't let their shortcomings stop them from achieving new heights in life.

You are a VP, an umpire, and a poet. How do you manage to fulfill different roles and responsibilities in your professional and personal life?

I try to prioritize and focus, and if I am not able to juggle everything, I try not to get mad at myself. I don't force myself into umpiring or writing poetry because I enjoy those activities. Whatever I do, I aim for a dedicated work ethic,

however, the main motivation is to enjoy the experience. Such a frame of mind helps. For instance, when Wimbledon is on, I don't think about my next poem. My focus is totally on the tennis court and poetry or FinTech is the last thing on my mind.

From where do you draw inspiration to write?

I don't seek out anything particular for inspiration. My poems are drawn from everyday things, it's stuff everyone sees. But I aim to frame them in a way that makes them unique. I want my readers to find in my poems a new way to see and imagine something mundane that they usually ignore every day.

How has BITS helped you achieve this multi-skilled and successful career?

During my second year at the campus, I wrote a poem for a poetry competition that was organized by the Department of Languages and Humanities. I captained the BITS tennis team, organized inter bhawan matches, and even umpired the matches. The education pattern at BITS helped me understand the art of balancing all these things. It gave me the freedom to do things in my way. And like every BITSian, I make use of those lessons every day.



Online Gaming: Next Big Thing in India

Dangal Games is India's most famous online gaming platform. Founded by Varun Mahna (Pilani, '09) and Varun Puri (Pilani, '09), the platform secured \$1 Million in seed A funding. Varun Mahna shares with the team of BITS Echo about Dangal Games and its future.

How did you come up with the idea of the Dangal Games?

We met this sport in 2014 when the standards were not as favourable as today. But, we both discussed the potential this business could have in the future and mutually decided about taking a shot at it. Our first product - PokerDangal brought us an improbable response from the audience. We decided to serve our audience with an ever-loved classic game rummy, by launching - RummyDangal. And now when the assets started settling in well, we finalized our minds about building the catalyst itself - Dangal Games, intending to serve the nation as a full-fledged wagon of online games.

Will Dangal Games expand to other games like cricket also?

Dangal Games is like a raft in itself, carrying an array of mindful skill games and casual games to voyage the waves of the online gaming sector in India. And we must say, you caught our vision right! Because soon enough you will be seeing FantasyDangal - India's Ultimate Destination for Fantasy Sports

wheeling around the market with multiple fantasy sports like - Cricket, Football, Basketball, & many more.

What is the future of online gaming platforms?

It is exciting to say that India is one of the top 5 online gaming markets around the globe. Plus, seeing the reports of EY-FICCI that our country alone makes up about 13% of the global market share with a growing CAGR of 22% and an anticipated value of somewhat above \$4 billion by 2024, we feel extremely blessed to be a part of this Galactus.

What role has BITS played in your journey as an entrepreneur?

BITS has played a major role in our lives that we are truly grateful for. We learned that if problems arise in our life, it is only so we can solve them and be a better version of ourselves. The rousing but at the same time competitive environment in BITS activated the problem-solving nerves of our brains. However, the power of networking we learned & extracurricular activities we got engaged in is also responsible for our overall personality development.

Why Hullo, Angad?



Angad Nadkarni (Hyd, '11) is a B.E Computer Science graduate from the Hyderabad campus who has found success far earlier than most. Currently an employee of Causal, he founded Examify, an exam-prep software, and co-founded Hullo. While still in college, he pitched the idea for the former in a TED talk, and the rest is history. Here is a brief summary of our conversation as we revisit the milestones of his journey so far.

I started coding when I was thirteen. I used to do freelance consulting for security and designs, when I met Vishal, the then CEO of Disney India. He played an instrumental role in funding and helping me start my first business. One of the primary goals of Vishal was to build an exam-prep-based app for India. We discussed this idea after my BITSAT. For a fresher, the freedom to design with funding was an excellent opportunity to build something from scratch.

The initial idea behind this app was to enable the students to search papers and questions while preparing for their exams. Within 4-6 months, we came up with a concrete product, which Vishal suggested we launch in TEDx Gateway, one of the largest idea conferences in Asia. By this time, we began to incorporate machine learning algorithms to help predict questions for a topic, classify a question into a specific chapter, etc., which helped increase productivity. I had to audition for us to be able to present our product at the conference. A lot was at stake for me, because TEDxGateway is a massive platform with millions streaming it and large audience. Fortunately, my talk was one of the two most popular talks that year. We started getting investors' attention, which was a huge breakthrough for us because getting external funding for Indian start-ups was rare back then.

I gravitated towards entrepreneurship; I built a competency in programming from a very young age, and, building a venture seemed very cool to me. Understanding venture capital was another struggle. It was, however, exciting to deal with that kind of money in the bank without the anchors of profit-pulling you down. Thankfully, I was active in the field of engineering.

The pandemic hit us pretty hard, and it was a rough time for me as well. But as I continued working, I learnt one thing: the art of storytelling is what separates ventures from business. Stories are how humankind builds the future. My journey at BITS was motivated by a lot of things, not just entrepreneurship. Few Indian universities does it like BITS, and its strong alumni network acts as a cherry on the cake. The professors were very supportive and advised me to focus on developing Hullo. E-Cell gave us the space to work on our project and to study. Having an office-like environment was very useful.

An alumnus, Raju Reddy, helped procure academic flexibility, which really helped accommodate travel related to the product we'd built.

BITS Made Me Shine

Prakhar Toshniwal (Goa, '17), is a former Vice President of the Council of Student Affairs (CSA). After graduation, he completed a diploma in film acting and ventured into the entertainment sector. He has been a part of several web shows, TV shows, theatre plays, and ad films. With us, he shares how his time at the campus motivated him in his journey.



What motivated you to join the Student Council and take up the position of Vice President?

After second year, I wanted to be a part of the council of student affairs (CSA) because it had a lot of responsibilities and duties that were aligned with what I wanted to do in college. All the members of the CSA had the same vision for BITS, and I feel that nothing except being a part of the CSA could have helped me do the things for my college, which I did. Peer Mentorship Program, which I started during my tenure with the support of all the faculty and faculty in-charges, is one initiative that I am very proud of. It's amazing to know that it's still going on.

Tell us a little about your field of interest or what you are working on at present?

I am an actor now and have been a part of the entertainment industry for three years. Since I was in the eleventh grade, I wanted to be in the entertainment industry. Later on, after my fifth year, I moved to Mumbai and it all happened while I was doing my internship at JPMorgan, in Mumbai itself. During that time, I started hunting for auditions and understood the work process that helped me get into the entertainment sector.

How being part of multiple communities at college helped you later in life?

Honestly, a lot! These experiences collectively instilled confidence in me while developing my decision-making skills. The soft skills I learned, developed my overall attitude and personality beyond the workspace.

How has your BITSian life helped you stand out from others in your field?

The people I was exposed to at BITS, seniors, juniors, mentors or colleagues, all of them have helped me in some way. The faculty are very supportive. The professors even recognize you even though you graduated many years ago. The strong network of BITS alumni is unique. I feel that I wouldn't have got so much exposure if I was part of any other institute.

What would you like to say to the current students?

I would like to say, do whatever your heart desires, and believe that you can ace it because you have a huge family here at BITS to support your dreams and endeavors in life.

Learning from Failure

Practical Skills <=> Good Grades



Vaibhav Singh (Pilani, '16) is the Co-Founder of Visit Health, a highly engaging corporate health benefits Platform that holistically covers preventive to curative care. He was voted as the General Secretary in 2013. Vaibhav holds a Bachelors in Pharmacy and Masters in Chemistry.

How has your experience as the Student Union General Secretary shaped you into the person you are today?

I was involved in multiple initiatives, one of them being BITS Compre, an online repository of notes. Some of the biggest selling points in my manifesto were Meera Redi, SU Cab making the BITS ID Card universal for payments at the library, Akshay, and other places. It helped me see things on a large scale at a young age, and the process of handling the SU budget also gives you a lot of responsibility. This experience taught me the art of networking and gave me immense confidence, the two most essential ingredients for success.

What was your inspiration behind starting up?

My grades were horrible during the 3rd year, but I managed to land up as a Product Management intern in Biocon which ultimately turned into a PPO. Despite not having good grades, I could land up with an internship because of the learnings from the General Secretary experience. After the internship, when I returned to college, I started selling ERP software to the Ministry of Defence with my current Co-Founder, Anurag. That was my first experience with entrepreneurship. During the outbreak of Swine Flu, we learned that the main problem that the people in the rural areas faced was that they had no access to healthcare facilities; for the people in the urban areas, time was the major challenge. These became the motivating factor for us to build a healthcare start-up.

What were some of the imminent challenges you faced in building Visit?

One of the biggest challenges I faced was keeping my start-up ambition a secret from my family members. I come from a service class, decorated civil servants and doctors. Being the youngest, it was hard convincing my parents because nobody was or had any experience in entrepreneurship. Seeing my

friends getting placed with big firms, enjoying the weekends while I was working from a 2BHK flat with 7 more people was a challenge. It was difficult to let go of the distractions and not sit for the placements or go for a Master's degree. But now that I look back, it was all worth it.

Please share an instance where you learned something from failure and how you got stronger from it?

In 2015, when we started Visit, market leaders in HealthCare like Practo and Portea struggled while start-ups in other sectors like Ola and Flipkart were making it big. Hence, it was a risky call to enter such a market and be motivated to change it. Visit was praised in the press for breaking the taboo and helping people, but we struggled with on boarding users as market adoption was absent. We had gotten into a market that wasn't mature enough and shifted to a B2B model, on boarding corporates. Our first product was a simple Video Call with Psychologists - the vertical which nobody was willing to pay for and the mode of communication which was least used back then. As we realized this, we added more verticals and layers of communication, started seeing progress, and raised funding from some great names in India and the Silicon Valley. After this stint, I learned that it is essential to understand a market before entering it as you might have the correct product and intentions, but it would not guarantee success if the market is not ready.

How did you feel when it was announced that you made it to the Forbes 30 Under 30 ?

I always aspired to be on the Forbes 30 Under 30 list and my inspiration for this was Bhavish Aggarwal, Co-Founder, Ola. He made it to the list while I was in my third year. My Co-Founder, Anurag spilled the news that we had made it to the list on a morning in April 2020, when it was announced.

ALUMNI CONTRIBUTIONS

Giving Back (April 2021—September 2021)

We would like to express our sincere thanks and gratitude to all the alumni who have made individual or collective contributions and corporates for CSR funding.

1. An amount of **Rs 25 lakhs** was received from Mr. Rakesh Kumar Verma (Pilani, '72) of MapmyIndia (CE Info Systems Pvt. Ltd.) towards the upcoming BITS Pilani Incubation and Innovation Centre along with mentorship and seed funding to promising start-ups.
2. An amount of **Rs 2.96 lakhs** has been received from CMS Computers Limited towards supporting two scholarships under 80% MCN in honor of Late Shri R. D. Grover (Pilani, '68).
3. An amount of **Rs 39 lakhs** was received from alumni across the globe as a financial support under the Daily Wager and COVID-19 campaign for providing ration to the washerman's/rediwallahas/auto-rikshaw drivers and other essential staff, who have been serving students in the three Indian campuses.
4. An amount of **Rs 10 lakhs** was donated by Founding Years Learning Solutions Pvt. Ltd. for a Research Project in the Department of Computer Sciences.

5. An additional **Rs 10.20** lakhs was donated by the alumni of 1964-69 batch towards the scholarship endowment created for supporting the needy students under MCN category.
6. An amount of **Rs. 9.86** lakhs was received from individual alumni either directly or through BITSAA International towards the merit-cum-needs scholarships to the needy students for the Semester I, 2020-2021.

BITS Pilani 2021 DAA Winners

On 16th September 2021 BITS Pilani announced its Distinguished Alumnus Award to its prominent alumni who have made remarkable contributions in their domains. The DAAs are announced annually for recognizing the outstanding and meaningful contribution globally by its alumni in the areas of Academia & Research, Corporate Leadership, and Entrepreneurship, Public Life & Philanthropy.

The winners for this time were selected by panelists included Mr Uday Kotak, Exec. Vice-Chairman & MD, Kotak Mahindra Bank): Chairperson, Mr. Harish Bhat, previous DAA winner & Brand Custodian at Tata Sons; Director of several Tata companies, Ms. Akila Krishnakumar, previous DAA winner & Founding Partner, Social Venture Partners, Mr. Debu Bhattacharya, Vice-Chairman, Hindalco, ABG, Prof R N Saha, Acting Vice-Chancellor, BITS Pilani, and Prof. Arya Kumar, Dean, Alumni Relations, BITS Pilani: Member-Secretary.

| S. No. | NAME | CATEGORY |
|--------|--|--|
| 1 | Prof. T.N. Vijaykumar (Professor of Electrical and Computer Engineering, School of Electrical and Computer Engineering, Purdue University) | Academia and Research |
| 2 | Prof. Malla Raghava Rao (ICEMR Program Director and Deputy Branch Chief of the NIAID Parasitology and International Programs Branch) | Academia and Research |
| 3 | Prof. Padmanabhan Seshaiyer (Professor of Mathematical Sciences Director of the STEM Accelerator Program, College of Science Director of COMPLETE (Center for Outreach in Mathematics Professional Learning and Educational Technology), George Mason University) | Academia and Research |
| 4 | Dr. Vikram Sampath (Independent Researcher, Author & Historian Adjunct Senior Research Fellow, Monash University) | Academia and Research |
| 5 | Ms. Ramkripa Ananthan (Chief of Design, Mahindra & Mahindra) | Corporate Leadership |
| 5 | Mr. Pratik Pota (Chief Executive Officer, Jubilant Foodworks Ltd.) | Corporate Leadership |
| 7 | Mr. Sukumar Ranganathan (Editor-in-Chief, Hindustan Times, HT Media Ltd.) | Corporate Leadership |
| 8 | Mr. Ranjan Kumar Mohapatra (Director HR, Indian Oil Corporation Chairman of Lanka IOC) | Corporate Leadership |
| 9 | Mr. Sriharsha Majety and Mr. Nandan Reddy (Co-Founder(s) Swiggy) | Entrepreneurship/ Public Life / Philanthropy |
| 10 | Mr. Abhinav Asthana and Mr. Abhijit Kane (Co-Founder(s) Postman) | Entrepreneurship /Public Life / Philanthropy |
| 11 | Mr. T. M. Vijay Bhaskar, IAS (Retd.) (Chairman, Karnataka Administrative Reforms Commission-II Former Chief Secretary to Government of Karnataka) | Entrepreneurship /Public Life / Philanthropy |
| 12 | Mr. Diaz Nesamoney (Founder & CEO Jivox Council of Global Advisors Yale School of Management Vice-Chair American India Foundation) | Entrepreneurship /Public Life / Philanthropy |

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MESSAGE FROM Editorial Team

The students have been studying remotely because of the COVID-19 pandemic, missing out on the precious years of their lives. I came on campus last year, and need I say how quite it was- totally opposite of what it was like when I first visited the campus in pre-COVID times.

However, 11 months down the line, and here I am witnessing the return of the students on campus. They've been allowed back on campus with the condition that they follow COVID protocols at all time.

This move by the authorities has been very welcoming by the students, especially the batch of 2020. You realise that the campus has come back to life when you see students walking with their backpacks, ear-phones plugged in their ears and their friends screaming from behind. Just hearing phrases like "Oye sunn" or "Chl Rotunda chlkr baithte hai" or "Clocktower k aage picture click krio meri", "C'Not chalet hai yrr, mess ka khana chor aj", you can't help but just smile because even though they missed out the college life, one thing they definitely did not miss was the mess food. Just a few days on campus, I also eaves dropped students discussing about fights, and arguments and the seniority of their seniors.

But thinking from a larger perspective, this is what college is all about. Stepping into a whole new world, saying good bye to the familiar feeling of home and letting the reality kick in. Once that comfort bubble bursts, you realise life wasn't what you once thought it to be. Irrespective of these years being crucial in many ways, college life MUST happen to everyone. These years mould you into the person you become. Because before you even realise it, it all gets over. Within the blink of the eyes, you'll be getting ready for one last party with the people whom you promise to be in touch always.

Bryan Adams said "Oh when I look back now// That summer seemed to last forever // And if I had the choice// Ya - I'd always wanna be there// Those were the best days of my life" you'll feel these words so hard that you won't be able to help yourself but smile. This is what these four, or five years for some, do to you, make you smile & cry at the same time.

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Prof. Rajeev Sakhuja

Sachin Arya

Geetika

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