

11th April, 2020

Dear Shri Nayyar,

First let me express my gratitude to you for agreeing to take up the responsibility of leading IITRAA. I wish you a very productive and successful tenure.

I would also like to congratulate the members of the newly constituted Executive Committee of IITRAA on their assumption of office.

Since I am unable to join the EC meeting, I request that this letter of mine be placed before the EC.

I believe that IITRAA can become a very effective vehicle for achieving the following two goals:

(A) To create opportunities for meetings and interaction among IITR alumni, across the globe. Such meetings or get-togethers are not only social events to strengthen existing bonds and create new ones, but they are also occasions for professional networking and career growth of IITR alumni.

- (i) Thus, IITRAA can contribute to the growth and rise of IITR alumni in their respective professions.
- (ii) To make this happen we need to create vibrant IITRAA chapters in all major cities/states of the world. IITRAA can play the role of a facilitator in creating and sustaining these chapters.

(B) To enlighten alumni about the present IITR (for a large number of alumni, the image of IITR is frozen in their minds because they did not have sufficient connect with UOR or IITR ever since they graduated several decades back). Today's IITR is quite different. The faculty and students are more conscious of the institute's legacy, its strengths and potential, its peer group, its obligations, its purpose, its direction and its interests.

- (i) Increased awareness about IITR will make alumni aware of the need for creating a strong "giving back" culture among IITR alumni.
- (ii) IITRAA needs to convey to the alumni that their alma mater is lagging behind its sister institutions in the "giving back" culture. This is hurting IITR in two ways:
 - a) It hurts the perception of IITR, as compared to the older IITs, among the entities that matter. These entities are funding agencies, industries that provide placement and projects, decision makers in the higher education sector, MHRD etc.
 - b) It obviously leads to less funds for infrastructure growth, for promotion of excellence among departments, faculty and students, and for extending help to needy students.

Interestingly, the objectives (A) and (B) are mutually reinforcing. If any one grows, the other will also grow.

Many of our well-placed alumni, including some Distinguished Alumnus Awardees, continue to be ignorant about simple things such as "Why does IITR need donations?" IITRAA can play a crucial role in answering this query. I am pained when I hear well-placed alumni in the western world who are surrounded by MITs and Stanfords asking this question from their alma mater. Clearly, there is a gap to be bridged and IITRAA can play a very useful and productive role in this endeavour.

Many, or rather most alumni, have one more misconception. They think that IITRAA is an extended arm of IITR. One reason for this misconception could be that IITR has given space to IITRAA office and a majority of its meetings are held in IITR. The alumni are not aware that the ground reality is different.

1. IITRAA has been unable to make concerted or systematic efforts to align itself with the vision and goals of IITR.
2. It has also been unable to fully align with what alumni want it to be.
3. Further, when some alumni get upset with IITRAA, they simultaneously get upset with IITR because for most of them the two entities are seamless and in several respects indistinguishable.

Recognising the inability of IITRAA to work towards the twin objectives stated above (A and B), almost three years back IITR took upon itself the responsibility of conducting reunions on the campus and IITRAA was made free to focus beyond Roorkee, both nationally and globally. Thus, it should organise chapters, chapter meets and help alumni network across the globe and thereby also bring alumni closer to IITR. The proposed direction was clear and I stated this in several public meetings as well as privately in my meetings with the key office bearers of IITRAA.

IITRAA BE A GLOBAL ORGANIZATION

The idea was that IITRAA should work to come closer to the widely spread alumni instead of being Roorkee centric. Since the alumni are all over the globe, so naturally IITRAA should look outwards instead of being an inward looking Roorkee centric local body.

Sadly, so much time has passed but not much has changed. We still continue to have archaic by-laws that require some key office bearers to be from Roorkee. In this electronic age, how can this be justified for an association that has members from across the globe?

Not only that, more than half of the EC continues to be from within a radius of 200 km of Roorkee. Further, if one looks at the actual participation of EC meetings, this fraction is as high as 70-80%, if not more. While Dr. Achal Mittal, who was personally focusing on the creation and activation of new chapters, did try to do a few things, IITRAA as an association has been unable to embrace the direction proposed by IITR.

In my view, the reason for this is not difficult to diagnose. The root of the problem is the current by-laws of IITRAA. This situation cannot be allowed to continue. We need to revise the by-laws without any further delay.

REVISE BY-LAWS

The new by-laws should fulfil the expectations of both alumni as well as IITR. They should facilitate engagement of more alumni, both in India and abroad, with IITRAA and IITR. I propose that the following three-member committee examines the present by-laws and prepares a proposal for revising the by-laws.

President, IITRAA - Chair
Vice-President, IITRAA - Member
DORA, IITR - Convenor

1. The proposal can be submitted within four weeks from now and it may please be considered by the EC within six weeks from now.
2. The new by-laws should stipulate that every alumni of IITR will be automatically enrolled as a member of IITRAA.

Further, in interactions and exchanges with alumni, it doesn't look nice if the Director or DORA find themselves in a corner where they are unable to defend or explain the functioning of IITRAA. It looks as if the institute is disowning the IITRAA or wants to distance itself from the IITRAA. This hurts both IITR as well as IITRAA. So the new by-laws should operationalise what most alumni think about IITRAA i.e. the new by-laws should make IITRAA an extended arm of IITR.

Lastly, all of us are flag bearers of a great legacy. We need to live up to it and work for taking IITR to greater heights. There is nothing else which will make alumni happier and so it should be a natural objective of IITRAA also.

I look forward to working with IITRAA to achieve our common objectives.

Thank you.

Ajit

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निदेशक/Director

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