

IIM BANGALORE

THEORY AND PRACTICE

A pioneer in diversity and inclusion



WHAT'S your magic?" asked one of the members of our International Advisory Committee at a recent meeting. While he was referring to what differentiates IIM Bangalore (IIMB) from hundreds of other business schools, this set me thinking about the distinctiveness of our institute and what we need to do to sustain it in future.

Though we articulated our vision in its current form only a few years ago, its ele-

ments have been an integral part of what we do for well over a decade. Our vision is "to be a global, renowned academic institution fostering excellence in management, innovation and entrepreneurship for business, government and society." What I like about our vision is the aspiration for excellence in whatever we do; our scope extending beyond management to entrepreneurship; and our quest for impact on a wide swathe of stakehold-



Students on the IIM Bangalore campus

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ers. This wider canvas is ideal for an “institution of national importance” in the world’s second most populous country that is seeking to realise its full potential.

Our mission elaborates how we will achieve this vision and has three elements: nurture innovative global business leaders, entrepreneurs, policymakers and social change agents through holistic and transformative education; provide thought leadership that is contextually embedded and socially relevant and makes positive impact; and pursue excellence in education and thought leadership simultaneously without making any trade-offs.

How well have we done on this?

What are our strengths? We recently went through a periodic review of our European Quality Improvement System (EQUIS) accreditation, leading to its renewal for another five years. EQUIS is internationally recognised as one of the most rigorous accreditation processes. It is one of the two global accreditations required to participate in the *Financial Times* rankings. IIMB was first accredited by EQUIS in 2010. What emerged from the process is that our strengths lie in the excellent profile of our students; our strong doctoral programme; high-quality management programmes which are well-ranked internationally; a strong commitment to digital learn-

ing and massive open online courses (MOOCs); strong executive education programmes; a strong connection to practice; a well-formulated diversity policy towards underprivileged students in India and students with disabilities; and strong achievements in research and publications in top international journals.

What enabled these? Education is a human talent-driven activity, so an obvious driver has been our very capable and talented faculty and non-teaching staff. But other factors have played a role. While there is really no shortcut to educational excellence, if I look back, one important element has been innova-

The Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore campus



tion. Another has been adapting to key changes in the environment.

SUCCESSIVE leadership teams at IIMB have been able to identify new opportunities and address them successfully. In 1998, just as the Indian software industry was about to take off, we leveraged our location in Bengaluru, the hub of the Indian software industry, to start a weekend MBA-equivalent programme with support from the industry to develop the managerial talent it required. A few years later, we worked with the Government to set up a Master's-level

programme in Public Policy and Management to help strengthen policy and managerial capabilities in public systems. And, in 2014, we embraced MOOCs by becoming an edX partner resulting in over 50 high-quality management courses offered globally on this powerful platform over the next seven years. We are proud that, according to a recent study, two of these courses are among the 100 most popular edX courses of all time and that around two million learners have enrolled in our MOOCs courses since inception.


By around 2005, the institute collectively realised the importance of thought leadership and reoriented itself in this

direction. We changed our norms and processes for faculty recruitment and selection, as also for performance appraisal and incentives to reflect this change. In tune with international best practices, a tenure-track system was introduced in 2014. The result has been a significant increase in high-quality research output focused on the top research journals. At the same time, we have tried to remain contextually relevant by directing our attention to problems relevant to “emerging” economies like India. Our research output in journals is complemented by hundreds of case studies on Indian and global companies in the Indian environment, and impactful books by our faculty like the recently published *Inclusive Business Models* and *Platform Business Models*.

In recent years, we realised that there is an emerging need for specialised MBA programmes that integrate deep technical skills with management. The first such programme, an MBA in Business Analytics, was launched in 2020. This programme has enabled us to create a template for future specialised MBA programmes.

MORE recently, the institute has been innovative in addressing national challenges. One such key national challenge is driving economic growth and employment through the growth of startups. IIMB has been a pioneer in this area with our entrepreneurship development programmes and incubation support under the umbrella of the NSRaghavan Centre for Entrepreneurial Leaning, recently completing 20 years of impactful contributions. We have a distinctive niche in this arena—a focus on the early-stage entrepreneur. A noteworthy recent development is our ability to do this at scale. Just a few months ago, we ran an online women's entrepreneurship programme supported by the National Commission for Women that was attended by a few thousand women entrepreneurs.

The need for greater diversity among faculty in India's leading institutions is well established. One of the reasons for



AGAINST THE BACKDROP OF THE NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY'S FOCUS ON MULTIDISCIPLINARY PROGRAMMES AND THE SHORTAGE OF HIGH-QUALITY OPTIONS IN UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION OUTSIDE TECHNICAL DISCIPLINES, IIMB PLANS TO ENTER THE UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION SPACE IN 2023, OUR GOLDEN JUBILEE YEAR