

# DU plans to charm alumni for funds

By Pallavi Majumdar  
TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**New Delhi:** The Delhi University is now looking to its alumni all over the world, to garner resources. From the first hesitant steps towards "networking", the university is confident that the alumni will respond once they feel cared for.

For examples galore... if Harvard, Stanford or IITs can do it with elan, then why not this largest central university in the country? If Nandan Nilekani of Infosys can thank his alma mater, IIT Mumbai, with a Rs 6.9 crore cheque, then why cannot some of the 2.5 million alumni of the cash-strapped Delhi University do the same.

However, there are many hurdles, — the biggest being its "impersonal presence". There are 80 colleges and students identify better with their individual colleges than the overarching university. Also, the university since its inception in May 1922, made no concerted effort towards building and nurturing an alumni network.

But as the university claims, things may no longer be treated so lightly. "We are working towards creating a bond for interactive partnership," claims dean of alumni affairs Sydney R Rebeiro.

So what is the university doing to re-establish links with its alumni? For starters, the university has released two

publications, the Alumni Heritage card and the first directory of DU Alumni, listing 1,200 names — with batches, current positions and addresses — of prominent alumni like industrialists, governors, artists, judges, academicians and IAS officers. Plans are afoot to "search 'n' find" over 7.5 lakh alumni for a total database. An alumnus has already offered to collect the data for the university.

The card, meanwhile has been sent to a select 300-plus distinguished alumni in India and abroad and marks milestones on nostalgia avenue.

That's not all. The university has developed an alumni resource bank of talent pools (TPs) from which both the university and alumni will be able to "invest in, earn and draw from" beginning January 2003, Rebeiro added.

"Alumni can network for jobs, business tie-ups," he said. The TPs consist of people from different fields.

The university is expecting a "highest-ever in DU history" grant of Rs 3 to Rs 4 crore from an international trust headed by a distinguished alumnus, also one of India's corporate giants.

The university is also waiting to launch a dozen alumni chapters in India and abroad and the alumni news called Alumni Articulate at the soon-to-be-launched DU website.

Some other alumni, including K K Birla and K Natwar Singh, have already chipped in with some money for the university development fund. The potential is clearly huge but only time will tell whether the attempts to stir up nostalgia bear fruit or not.

## Money matters

### Motivation

If Stanford or IITs can do it, then why not the largest central university in the country?

### Glitch

Students identify better with their individual colleges than the university. The university, since its inception in 1922, made no concerted effort to build an alumni network.

New Year's Day AD 2003

THE TIMES OF INDIA, NEW DELHI

# DU looks to old boy network for funds

By Rajat Pandit

NEW DELHI: From a tiny, dingy room tucked away in one corner of the sprawling north campus, Delhi University is taking its first hesitant steps in "networking". The ultimate aim is to tug at the umbilical cord of its alumni spread all over the world to garner resources.

Well, if Harvard, Stanford or even the *desi* IITs can do it with élan, then why not the largest central university in the country? If Nandan Nilekani of Infosys can thank his alma mater, IIT Mumbai, with a Rs 6.9 crore cheque, then why cannot some of the 2.5 million alumni of the cash-strapped Delhi University do the same.

There are many hurdles to be surmounted. For one, the university, which has as many as 79 colleges, is perceived as an "impersonal presence". The heart beats more for one's individual college rather than the overarching university.

For another, the university — since its inception in May 1922 — has allowed the gap between it and its alumni to widen to such an extent that it may prove difficult to bridge. A senior professor says there have been no concerted efforts by the university, and most of its colleges, towards building and nurturing an alumni network.

"No longer. Even though the whole concept of alumni is virgin territory in the South Asian

region, we are now working to create bonds for an interactive partnership," claims university dean of alumni affairs, Sydney R Rebeiro.

"And once you feel cared for and are in touch, you will be willing to help your parent university," he adds.

So, what is the university doing to re-establish links with its alumni? For starters, the "DU Alumni News" has been launched on the Internet. From the latest book on filmstar Amitabh Bachchan and the new film of Shekhar Kapoor to the sporting exploits of Jaspal Rana and Gaurav Gheji, it attempts to give information about former students.

Then, says Rebeiro, a "DU Alumni News Magazine" is slated to begin publication towards the end of this millennium.

There is also a first-ever alumni directory in the pipeline. But it will have only 1,200 names — with batches, current positions and addresses — of prominent alumni like industrialists, artists, judges, academicians and IAS officers.

Rebeiro, however, rises to the defence promptly. "Funds were less and the 1,200 names were readily available. Once we have networked successfully, a second enriched directory will be brought out," he claims.

"Networking" is certainly the new buzzword. For more effective communication, around 10 "core-coordinators" have been identified and

some chapters in India and abroad are being established.

For instance, Jivat N Thadani, son of former Hindu College principal N N Thadani, is the core-coordinator for the "America Sector" of DU alumni in New Hampshire (US). An IAS officer in Geneva (Switzerland), Alwyn Didar Singh, is collecting information about alumni in Europe, while a West Asia chapter is coming up in Jeddah.

"We are building talent pools in diverse fields like lawyers, professionals and academics of DU alumni. This will ultimately form a resource bank and database...alumni can network for jobs, business tie-ups," says Rebeiro.

In addition to appeal letters being sent to alumni, the university is also planning to open charitable bodies — with bank accounts to accept tax-free donations — named "Friends of Delhi University" in the US and Europe.

This idea, in fact, came up when a professor based in New York, Ashit K Ganguly, donated \$ 85,000 — the largest-ever single donation — to the university recently.

Some other alumni, including K K Birla and K Natwar Singh, have already chipped in with some money for the university development fund. The potential is clearly huge but only time will tell whether the attempts to stir up nostalgia bear fruit or not.

23 Nov 1999

SR-m-the-media  
1999 AD



# *Austerity is fine but it'll kill us, DU tells UGC*

By Rajat Pandit

NEW DELHI: Delhi University is in a "precarious financial condition". It may well be pushed over the edge if the recent austerity measures directed by the University Grants Commission are implemented.

Teachers will get "frustrated and demotivated" and students will be the "worst sufferers". This, in effect, is the message conveyed to UGC in a letter dashed off by DU registrar Kamalakant Panda on Monday, said sources.

Under the directions of the Union finance ministry's department of expenditure, UGC on August 31, asked all central universities to implement certain austerity measures with immediate effect. Among them are DU, JNU, Jamia, Benares Hindu University and Aligarh Muslim University.

The directives include 10 per cent cut in posts; ban on filling up vacant posts; 10 per cent mandatory cut in non-plan, non-salary expenditure; ban on new expenditure proposals; ban of foreign travel; and cut in existing schemes.

Already reeling as it is under a severe resource crunch, higher education will receive a crippling body-blow if the directives are implemented, feel several academicians.

The directives will hit DU the hardest. It was not able to hold meetings of selection committees for teaching posts for a long time because the Union human resource development ministry failed to intimate the nominees of the visitor (President of India) in time.

Then the UGC changed the qualifications required for academic posts. Consequently, all posts were readvertised. As per sources, Mr Panda's letter said all this has led to a "huge backlog" of vacant posts. As of now, around 200 of the 700 posts in various departments are vacant.

The selection process for these posts had begun afresh, with screening committees scrutinising applications, when the UGC direc-

tives came like a bolt from the blue. Teaching will be adversely affected if the posts are not filled up soon.

Moreover, DU is yet to fill the posts for several new courses, departments and centres, in thrust areas, sanctioned under the 9th Plan. Sources said vice-chancellor V R Mehta has already communicated his distress to UGC chairperson Hari Prasad Gautam.

In his letter, Mr Panda said any further pruning was not possible. As it is, DU has drastically cut procurement of periodicals, books, chemicals and equipment due to the financial crunch and cost escalation in recent years.

An additional 10 per cent cut will force DU to prune academic and research activities even further, which will be a "grave deterrent" to ongoing work. It also talks of foreign travel ban for teachers which will cause "frustration" since they will not be able to present their research findings in international forums.

At present, DU gets a measly Rs 3 lakh for this purpose. The university does not allow a teacher to attend a conference more than once in three years. Moreover, 50 per cent of the travel grant has to be obtained from elsewhere.

The financial crisis is especially threatening for DU since it is the only central university with colleges under it. Of the total grants it gets from UGC, almost 95 per cent goes towards payment of salaries.

With the new directives, the situation will become even more precarious, where teachers are appointed on the basis of actual workload and the student-teacher ratio.

Teachers are already up in arms over the new UGC directives, with the Federation of Central Universities Teachers' Association calling for a September 23 total bandh in all universities.

But all may not be lost yet. Sources said the HRD ministry has recommended to the finance ministry that universities and colleges should be kept out of the purview of the latest austerity drive.



T01 18-11-2000 AD

# Your alma mater needs cash

*Cash-strapped varsities are turning to their alumni for support. While there's moolah pouring into the IITs from successful ex-students, DU has made a beginning and JNU is pulling up its socks, reports Smeeta Mishra Pandey.*

**NEW DELHI: Indian Institute of Technology:** If IITs can have so many of them, why can't the other Indian universities? This is the one question that comes to mind when you meet IIT-Kharagpur alumnus and US-based firm InfoUSA Inc CEO Vinod Gupta. The man who kicked off the "moolah flow" into IITs by giving his alma mater \$2 million to start a management school in 1991. After his donation, another \$2 million flowed into the institute. Gupta is in Delhi now. This time he is finalising the details for donating Rs 25 crore to IIT-Kharagpur by March next year.

Fortunately, Gupta is not alone. IIT-Delhi has found great support and help in Rajat (McKinsey) Gupta, Stanford University's A Paulraj, NIIT's Rajendra Pawar, United Technology Research Centre's O P Sharma and other successful alumni, including Vinod Mahendroo, Vinod Khosla among others.

As a matter of policy, all the IITs in the country keep in constant touch with their alumni at home and those settled abroad. "We have hun-

dreds of alumni chapters all over the world," informs IIT-Delhi's Dr A K Sengupta. "Our alumni cells hold get-togethers regularly," he adds.

**Delhi University:** "All the universities want *rokda*. So the alumni have become important. But we want a more meaningful interactive relationship with our alumni," declares DU alumni affairs dean Sydney Rebeiro. In the past two years, DU has collected approximately Rs 45 lakh from its alumni. They have enrolled 17,000 alumni and received significant contributions, financial and otherwise.

But the dean says the hurdles are many. "The challenge is to establish an emotive chord between the alumni and the university. When two people from Delhi University get together, they can't just say, 'hey, we are both from DU, let's get together.' Because, it may so happen that the two come from different colleges, one from the south and the other north campus, and may not have visited each other's college except during festivals."

But DU is now putting its best

foot forward. For starters, they have begun inviting eminent alumni as chief guests in college events and introducing them to governing bodies. It has even set up an alumni resource bank.

**Jawaharlal Nehru University:** Selected JNU faculty members are creating a database of its alumni. "Earlier, the JNU administration was doing the job," says JNU spokesperson Jagdish Lal. "But we realised teachers are better equipped to do the job."

Lal is also vocal about the challenges faced in the collection of alumni data. "Very few people respond," he laments. "But we are trying to contact JNUites settled at home and abroad. As far as cash donations go, we can't really drop any names yet. But we are on the job. We have posted a alumni registry and database on the Internet as well."

