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MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT, FFE

Celebrating Milestones, Embracing Gratitude

Dear Esteemed Supporters,

As we approach the culmination of another fruitful financial year ending in March, it is with immense gratitude and pride that we extend our heartfelt appreciation to each one of you for your unwavering support and generosity towards the Foundation for Excellence (FFE).

In the fiscal year 23-24, your invaluable contributions totaled an astounding \$2.56 million, a testament to your steadfast commitment to empowering bright young minds in India. Your donations have not only transformed lives but have also set new benchmarks for our collective impact.

We are thrilled to share that your generosity has facilitated scholarships for 3,950 deserving students across India, marking a new record in our journey towards educational equity and opportunity. Each scholarship represents a beacon of hope, enabling talented individuals to pursue their dreams and unlock their full potential.

Reflecting on our remarkable journey over the past three decades, we are reminded of the transformative impact of our mission. Since our inception in 1994, FFE has been dedicated to breaking barriers and opening doors to education for deserving students, regardless of their socioeconomic background.

One such inspiring story that epitomizes the transformative power of education is that of a young Muslim girl, the daughter of a humble tailor master in Chennai. Initially destined to work in her father's shop, she was granted a FFE scholarship, which enabled her to pursue a degree in MBBS and fulfill her dream of becoming a doctor. Through her perseverance and dedication, she not only uplifted her own family but also inspired countless others to aspire for a brighter future.

Today, as we stand at the threshold of a new chapter in FFE's journey, we are deeply humbled by the remarkable progress we have achieved together. Our growth and success would not have been possible without the consistent support of our dedicated donors and the relentless commitment of our FFE alumni.

Once again, we extend our heartfelt gratitude to each one of you for your continued support and belief in our mission. Your generosity is not just an investment in education; it is an investment in a brighter, more equitable future for generations to come.

With deepest appreciation,

Minoo Gupta



**Message from
Minoo Gupta
President,
Foundation
for Excellence**

UPCOMING EVENT



FOUNDATION FOR EXCELLENCE
Transforming Education

Come for a GALA time...
Stay for an inspiring cause

APRIL · 25 · 2024

VENUE
 TRIBECA 360[®] / 70 DESBROSSES ST. / NEW YORK, NY 10013

ARRIVAL
 5:30 REGISTRATION AND COCKTAIL RECEPTION

ATTIRE
 BUSINESS CASUAL OR ETHNIC INDIAN

Chief Guest
 SAVITA SUBRAMANIAN / HEAD OF U.S. EQUITY & QUANTITATIVE STRATEGY @ BOFA
 Recognized on Barron's list of the 100 Most Influential Women in U.S. Finance

Guest of Honor
 MEERA GANDHI / CEO AND FOUNDER OF THE GIVING BACK FOUNDATION
 Making the world a better place through Education and Mental wellness initiatives

Anchor / Entertainment
 LAUGHING LASSI / CELEBRATING SOUTH ASIAN HUMOUR
 The Best South Asian Standup Comedy Show in New York

The Foundation For Excellence (FFE) is excited to host its 2024 New York Gala, on **April 25th at Tribeca 360**. This annual event brings together FFE's supporters to celebrate education's transformative power. Expected to host 175 guests, including generous donors and industry leaders, the Gala supports FFE's mission of providing education to bright but financially underprivileged students in India.

The event will be attended by FFE Board members and Ms. Minoo Gupta, FFE's President, in her address will highlight the Gala's role in inspiring contributions. Attendees will also be meeting FFE's founder, Dr. Prabhu Goel, and hear success stories from FFE scholars and alumni. Distinguished guests including Ms. Savita Subramanian, Head of U.S. Equity & Quantitative Strategy at BOFA and Ms. Meera Gandhi, CEO and Founder of The Giving Back Foundation will be discussing education's importance and philanthropy's role in community empowerment.

The evening also promises laughter and entertainment with a special performance by 'Laughing Lassi', well known for its shows focusing on South Asian humour.

FFE looks forward to an inspiring evening at the NY24 Gala, reinforcing its commitment to educational excellence.

For more information please contact: **Mr. Anil Kumar** at **anil@ffe.org** or **+1408-892-9920**

1. NEWS & EVENTS

Joy Thomas Foundation (JTF) Webinar; Perspectives from Industry Tech and Soft skills required to succeed in the job market



FFE scholars
during the session conducted
by JTF leaders

On 21st January, 2024, a virtual session was conducted for 200 FFE engineering scholars by the volunteers of the Joy Thomas Foundation-USA. The session, led by **Mr. Balaji Shyamkumar**, Chief Technical Officer at Noonum Inc, addressed and provided perspectives on diverse and new technologies, and necessary soft skills required to gain employment and different job opportunities in the technology arena. During the interactive session, students gained valuable insights on market trends and future jobs.

Joy Thomas Foundation (JTF) Webinar; Opportunities in core Engineering with the rise of Emerging Technologies



FFE scholars
participating in the Virtual session
conducted by JTF leaders

On March 24th, 2024, a second virtual session by Joy Thomas Foundation (JTF) USA volunteers, **Mr. Vinod Aravindakshan** CTO, Carrerbolt & **Dr. Ajit Paranjpe**, CTO (Retd), Veeco, addressed "Opportunities in core Engineering with the rise of Emerging Technologies" for FFE scholars. The webinar focused on trends and opportunities in fabrication, equipment and materials for semiconductor devices. Attended by 300+ FFE scholars, the session included an informative presentation, followed by discussion, and an interactive Q&A.

Participation in India Fundraising Conference, 23-24 February 2024



Dr. Sudha Kidao at the India Fundraising Conference held on 23-24 February 2024

FFE's Managing Trustee, Dr. Sudha Kidao, was recently invited to participate in a panel discussion at the esteemed India Fundraising Conference held on 23-24 February 2024 at India Habitat Centre, New Delhi. The conference, known for highlighting innovative approaches to fundraising, provided a platform for Dr. Sudha to share FFE's impactful initiatives with a global audience.

In the engaging panel discussion titled "Fundraising Success Stories: Celebrating Innovators in Philanthropy," Dr. Sudha captivated attendees with the inspiring stories of FFE's Circle of Giving by FFE's alumni. This unique "Pay-forward" program, designed to encourage scholarship awardees to support the Foundation when they become self-reliant is an innovative approach to self-sustainability. The idea resonated with the audience, who hailed it as a ground-breaking, self-sustaining model.

The success of the Circle of Giving by Alumni underscores FFE's commitment to fostering long-term educational empowerment. By showcasing this innovative approach to fundraising, Dr. Sudha not only spotlighted the transformative impact of FFE's initiatives but also sparked meaningful conversations about sustainable philanthropy within the global community.

"No one has ever become poor from giving."

– Anne Frank.

India Giving Day



Give a Gift of Education,
Transforming Generations



India Giving Day

Powered by India Philanthropy Alliance

make it possible

MARCH 1, 2024

Foundation For Excellence actively participated in the 2nd India Giving Day on March 1st 2024, organized by India Philanthropy Alliance (IPA), a network of leading India-focused non-profits in the U.S. Through its participation in India Giving Day, FFE made significant strides in contributing to social welfare programs in India. FFE raised \$35,000 and added 12 new donors to its network. This influx of support not only highlights the growing awareness and interest in FFE's mission but also signifies the expanding community of individuals dedicated to promoting education and opportunity in India.

FFE is a founding member of this alliance. Large foundations like the Rural India Supporting Trust and The MacArthur Foundation have provided crucial campaign support to India Giving Day, while many smaller foundations also sponsored the event. This broad support highlights the growing recognition and importance of initiatives like India Giving Day.

We sincerely applaud the generosity and dedication of all those who participated in India Giving Day. This movement continues to gain momentum and make a meaningful impact, bringing together Indian-Americans and other supporters to support the development and progress of India and its people.

2. DONOR – SCHOLAR ENGAGEMENTS

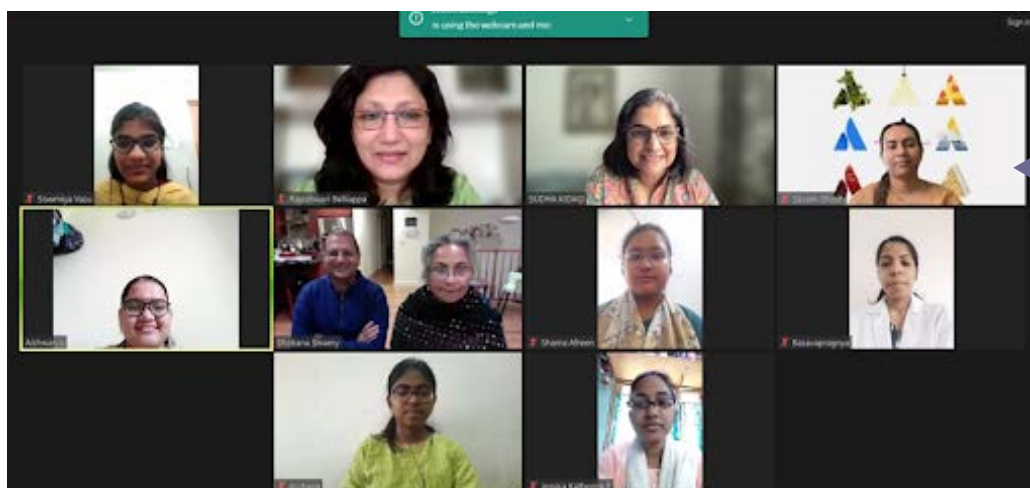
a) Virtual donor-scholar meet with Dr Saroj Mehta, Houston, Texas, USA

On March 3rd, FFE organized a special meeting between US based donor **Dr. Saroj Mehta**, and her sponsored students from IIT Roorkee. Through a Zoom call, facilitated by **Mr. Anil Kumar** from FFE-USA, Dr. Mehta virtually met her supported students who include one medical student from Lady Hardinge Medical College, New Delhi (LHMC) and six students from IIT Roorkee, the alma mater of her late husband.

One student shared his excitement about being offered an internship at Microsoft, potentially leading to a job offer, much to everyone's delight. Mr. Anil Kumar also talked about FFE's mentorship program, encouraging students to join in their third year.

Dr. Mehta expressed her happiness in seeing how her donations are making a difference in students' lives. She finds joy in knowing that her support is helping deserving students achieve their dreams. The meeting ended with a sense of gratitude and inspiration. Through initiatives like this, FFE continues to support students in realizing their potential and shaping a brighter future.

b) Scholar Meet with Mr. Padmanabha Rao & Mrs. Shobhana Swamy, 18th February, 2024

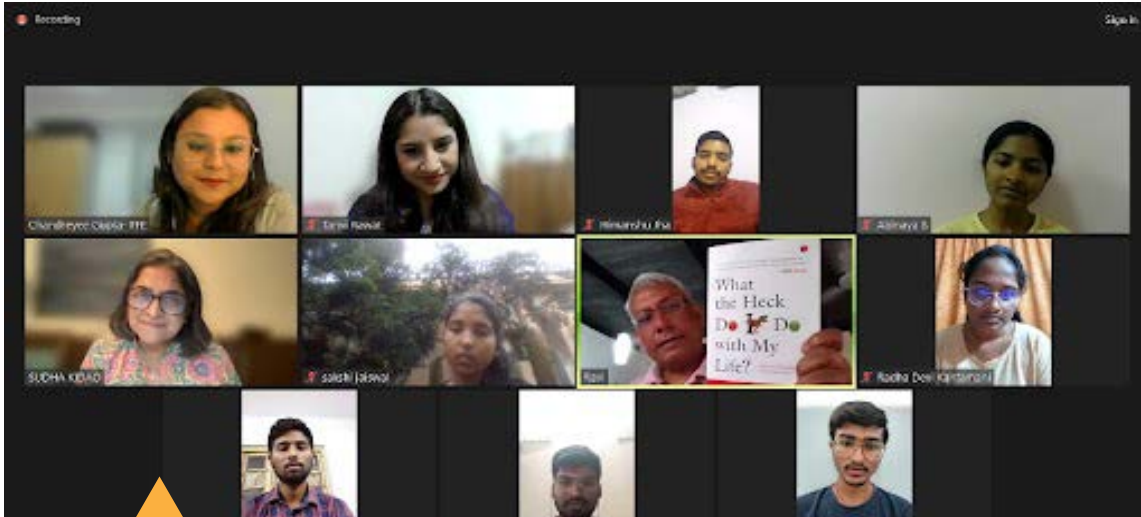


FFE Donors
Mr. Padmanabha
Rao and Mrs.
Shobhana
Swamy during an
online scholar
meet up

FFE's donors, Mr. Padmanabha Rao & Mrs. Shobhana Swamy, residents of USA virtually interacted with Medical and Engineering scholars whom they sponsor. During the interactive session, students shared their journey, academic progress, college activities and future plans. The donors were pleased to hear details of the work experiences of 3 alumni, who are now well placed at Citicorp, Mphasis & Atlassian. The donors were especially impressed by their views on "Circle of Giving".

FFE remains thankful to these dedicated donors for taking out time to interact, guide and motivate the students.

c) Scholar Meet with Mr. Ravi Venkatesan, 18th January, 2024



FFE Donor Mr.Ravi Venkatesan during an online scholar meet up

FFE Donor, Mr.Ravi Venkatesan, virtually interacted with the engineering scholars supported by him on 18th January 2024. During the session, students participated by sharing their journey and aspirations with him.

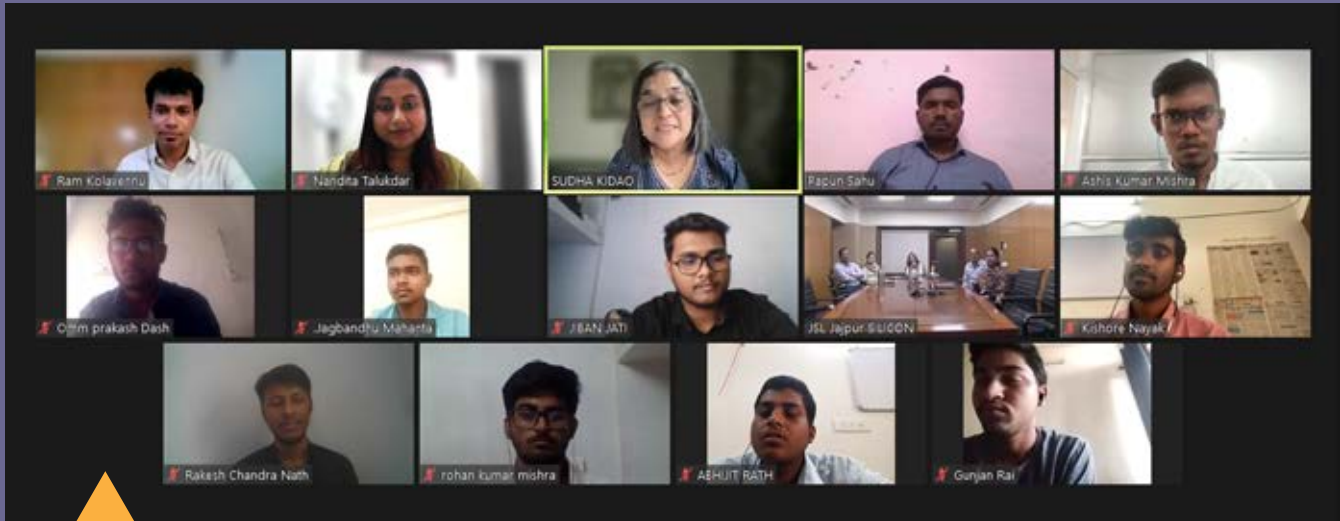
An alumnus of IIT Mumbai and Harvard Business School, Mr. Ravi is a business leader, a social entrepreneur, and an author. Over the years, he has led several companies and has served as the Chairman of Cummins India, Microsoft India, and Bank of Baroda. He founded the Global Alliance For Mass Entrepreneurship and currently chairs The Global Energy Alliance for People and Planet (GEAPP).

Mr. Ravi spoke about his inspiring journey and tips on successful career growth and emphasized the importance of continuous learning, to his set of supported scholars. FFE's Managing Trustee, Dr. Sudha Kidao also addressed the scholars and thanked Mr. Venkatesan for his support and for sharing his valuable insights with his supported scholars.

“We make a living by what we get. We make a life by what we give.”

– Winston Churchill

d) Virtual Inauguration of FFE-JINDAL STAINLES Scholarship program, 18th February, 2024



FFE-Jindal Scholars during the virtual inauguration of FFE-JINDAL STAINLESS Scholarship Program

Jindal Stainless Foundation commenced a new partnership with FFE in FY 2023-24 to support 18 academically brilliant and financially deserving scholars, pursuing their Engineering (BE/BTech) courses in India. Throughout their 4-year course, they will be supported in the forms of Scholarship, Skills Training, and Mentorship.

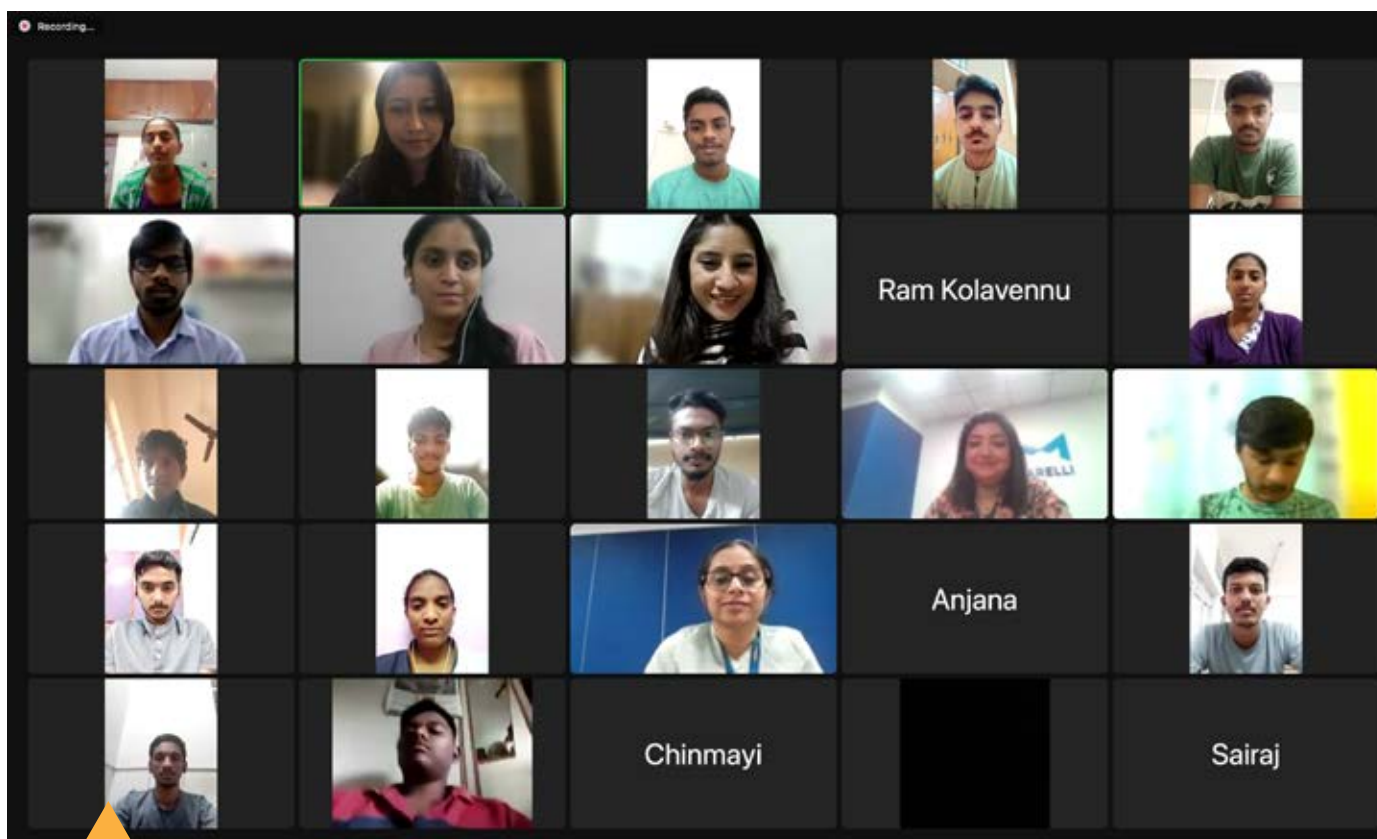
The program was inaugurated on **18th Feb 2024**, by **Mrs. Deepika Jindal**, Chairperson, Jindal Stainless Group; along with other representatives of the foundation's CSR team. FFE was represented by Dr. Sudha Kidao, Managing Trustee, Ram Kolavennu, COO and the FFE team. The scholars shared their inspiring stories of hardships, aspirations, and hope during the interactive session.

Mrs. Deepika Jindal was appreciative of the frank conversation with students and their strong determination to succeed despite hardships and challenges as they embarked on their educational journey, placing special emphasis on their emotional well being.

“The simplest acts of kindness are by far more powerful than a thousand heads bowing in prayer.”

– Mahatma Gandhi

e) Scholar Meet with Marelli India Pvt. Ltd, 29th February, 2024



Students supported by Marelli India Pvt.Ltd. during the virtual meet up

On 29th February, 2024, FFE hosted a virtual interactive session between Marelli India Pvt. Ltd. and their supported scholars. Marelli India Pvt. Ltd. was represented by **Ms. Anjali Diwakar**, CSR Head, **Ms. Kamaksha Kongovi**, Senior HR Manager, and **Ms. Shruti Shekhar**, Manager HR Business Partner.

During the first donor-scholar engagement, scholars shared information about their family background. Students also expressed their gratitude on being awarded FFE's scholarships as they pursued their higher education goals. The scholars also reflected on the importance of the "Circle Of Giving".

The FFE team provided an overview of the Mentorship and Skill Training Program, underscoring its role in enhancing the scholar's personal and professional development. Additionally the representatives from Marelli India Pvt. Ltd. extended their guidance and encouragement to the scholars pointing out the importance of academic excellence and participation in co-curricular activities.

Overall the session served as a platform for a meaningful exchange between the donors and scholars strengthening the collective goal of empowering scholars through education.

**f) Donor-Scholar meet
and students' office visit
to Ingersoll Rand
Technology and Services
Pvt Ltd. (IRT SPL),
Bangalore,
5th March,2024**

An in-person meeting between Ingersoll Rand Technology and Services Pvt Ltd (IRT SPL), and their supported scholars was held in their Bangalore office on 5th March. 16 students (9 from Bangalore, 3 from Surathkal, 3 from Mysore and 1 scholar from Dharwad) attended the interactive event that included the IRT SPL team.

The event commenced with an introduction and an icebreaker session led by the IRT SPL team, setting a welcoming atmosphere for everyone involved. Following this, the scholars embarked on a comprehensive lab and facilities tour, that provided insights into the work environment at IRT SPL.

One of the highlights of the program was the interactive mentoring session facilitated by a senior team member from IRT SPL where the scholars got an opportunity to interact,ask questions and get valuable guidance from the mentor.



IRT SPL-FFE scholars visit to IRT SPL Bangalore office

g) Office visit and meet up for FFE-TerraPay Students, 5th March, 2024

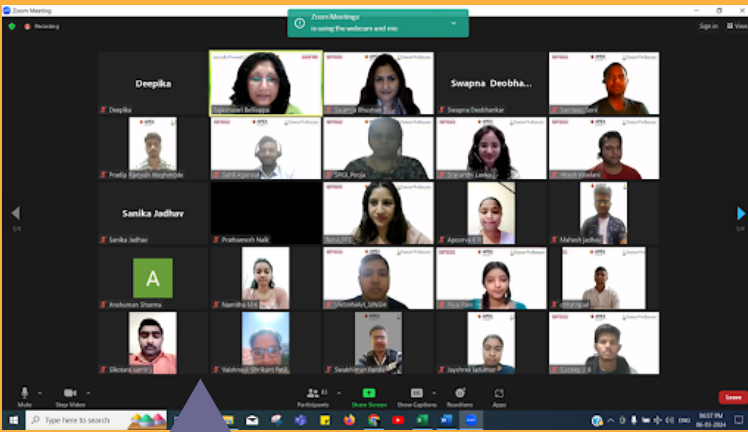


FFE-TerraPay scholars visit the TerraPay office for a Donor-Scholar engagement.

On 5th March, 2024, 8 FFE-TerraPay scholars visited the TerraPay office in Bangalore. The session provided an opportunity to visit the TerraPay office and understand their work and interact with the TerraPay Leadership Team. A visit to a corporate office was the first for most students; the visit ended on a happy note with the scholars receiving a special gift from TerraPay.

TerraPay supports a cohort of 17 FFE scholars.

h) Donor-Scholar Meet with S&P Global, 6th March, 2024



FFE-S&P Global scholars interacting with S&P Global leaders during a virtual session

On **March 6, 2024**, S&P Global Senior Leadership Team including **Sravanthi Lanka**, Senior Director at S&P Global Market Intelligence, **Pooja Nair**, Director at S&P Global, **Saumya Bhushan**, Lead-Corporate Communications, South Asia at S&P Global, **Sahil Agarwal**, Senior Product Manager, Financial Institutions at S&P Global Market Intelligence, **Kishor Pujara**, Business Development and Growth Lead at S&P Global Market Intelligence, **Hitesh Kewlani**, Operations Manager at S&P Global, **Swapna Deobhankar**, Manager HR -People Partner at S&P Global and Ahmedabad APEX (Asian Professional for Excellence, a People Resource Group, PRG, at S&P Global) members met the sponsored FFE scholars from the Engineering, Medical, Law and B. Pharmacy streams, over a virtual meet.

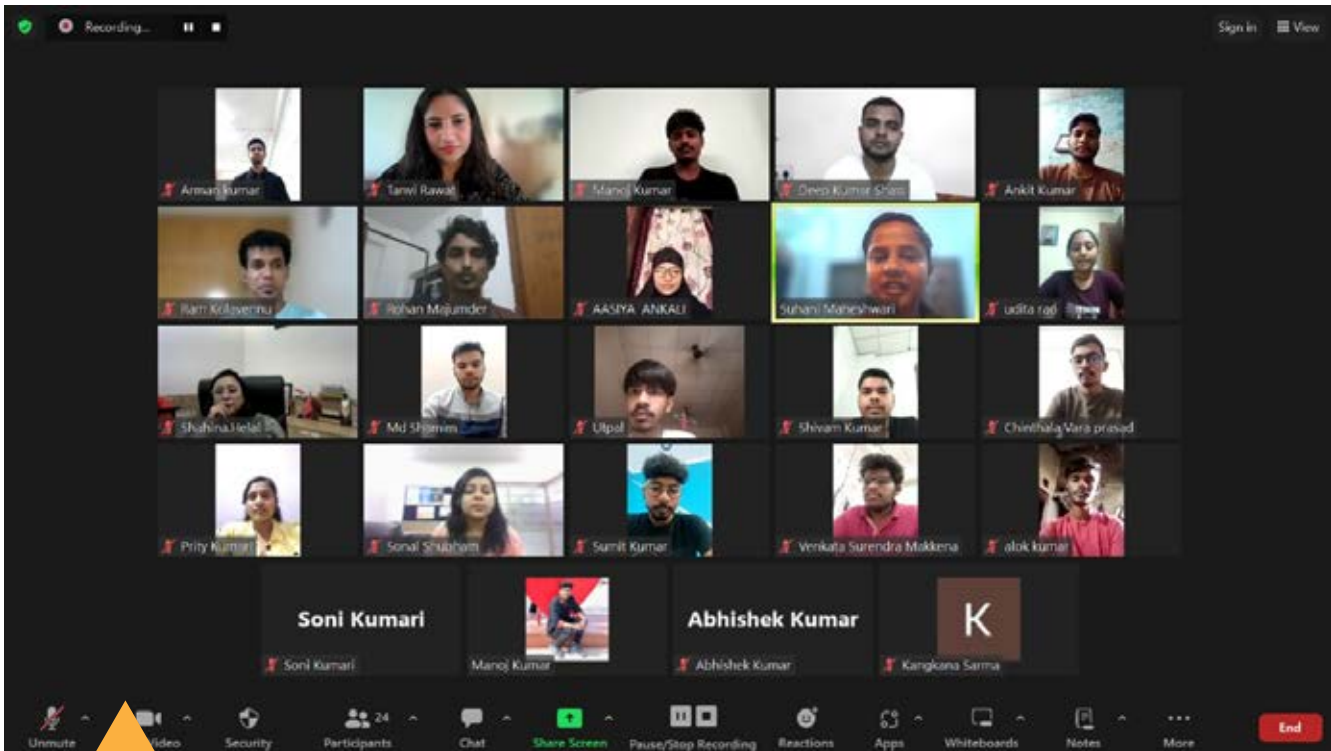
APEX PRG at S&P Global is dedicated to offering programs that boost opportunities for personal, professional, business, and community success, all while nurturing leadership skills.

Saumya Bhushan lead the session that included 70+ FFE-S&P Global sponsored students who engaged in a 'Communication Skills' session, enabling them to learn about crucial career-relevant skills for building a solid foundation in their professional journey.

This session addressed the significance of both written and verbal interaction along with strategies for enhancing communication effectiveness.

Students received insightful advice on how to communicate effectively in both conversation and writing from this highly relevant and helpful session.

i) Donor-Scholar Meet with CelebiNAS Airt Services India Pvt. Ltd., 24th March, 2024



Virtual Donor-Scholars engagement with FFE-Celebi Aviation scholars

The new batch of 30 FFE-Celebi Aviation scholars came together for a virtual interaction on March 24. The event was graced by **Ms. Shahina Helal**, Director HR - Celebi Delhi Cargo Terminal Management Pvt Limited and **Ms. Sonal Shubham**, CSR Senior Executive. Their words ignited enthusiasm and passion among the scholars. The session proved to be a fruitful learning experience for both FFE and Celebi Aviation, strengthening the commitment to their shared mission. The event also served as a platform for the scholars to express gratitude and for donors to witness the tangible impact of their contributions towards higher education.

CelebiNAS Airport Services India Pvt. Ltd. is a Ground Handling Agent at Mumbai Airport, catering to International, Domestic flight operations, Cargo flight operations and Charter flight operations. Stories of resilience and determination from scholars who have overcome various obstacles to pursue their graduation studies were shared during the session. The dignitaries from Celebi Aviation interacted with scholars and motivated them. FFE's COO **Mr. Ram Kolavennu**, addressed the session and thanked Celebi Aviation for creating a positive impact in the lives of these deserving scholars.

3. VOICE OF SCHOLARS



Shivani Parmar

**BE/BTech, Computer Science
and Engineering
National Institute of Technology
Patna (NIT Patna), Bihar**

**Supported by FFEUS donor
Arun & Vineeta Johary**

Hailing from the village of Salikheda, Madhya Pradesh, Shivani battled financial obstacles to pursue her education. She belongs to a joint family with seven members, relying solely on her father's income as a farmer. However, Shivani excelled academically, scoring 94.8% in her class XII exams. Her determination led her to secure a commendable rank of 45, 843 in the JEE among approximately 12 lakh applicants, earning her admission to the prestigious National Institute of Technology, Patna.

Facing financial strain, especially with her grandparents needing medical care, Shivani found support in the FFE scholarship from Mr. Arun & Ms. Vineeta Johary.

This assistance not only eased financial burdens but also allowed her to focus on her studies. With dedication and hard work, Shivani maintained an impressive average CGPA of 8.8 (based on her scores for semester I-VI).

Her journey culminated in securing an internship which has the possibility of getting converted into a full time position at IBM as a Software Developer, with an impressive salary. Shivani's story exemplifies the transformative impact of education.



Amit Maindola

**BTech 4th Year
Computer Science and Engineering,
Indian Institute of Technology
(IIT-Mandi), Mandi, Himachal Pradesh**

Amit hails from Pithampur, Madhya Pradesh; he was born into a family grappling with financial constraints. His father, a security guard, and mother a homemaker sustained on a minimum monthly income of INR 10,000. Solely dependent on his father's income, his home was a dilapidated closed factory, which lacked basic facilities like electricity. Despite these challenges, Amit's parents' commitment to his education, coupled with the encouragement from his dedicated school teachers, fueled his determination to pursue his dreams. Academically gifted Amit's admission in the prestigious JNV (Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya) relieved his family of the educational expenses at school. He excelled in both class X and XII board exams with a score of 89.3% and 91.8%, respectively.

The turning point in Amit's aspirations occurred when he secured an impressive rank of 3867 in the Joint Entrance Exam in 2020, gaining him admission into IIT Mandi, Himachal Pradesh. His dream was realized through the support of the FFE scholarship, generously sponsored by Arpan Foundation-USA.

Amit acknowledges that this scholarship spared his family from substantial financial strain, averting the need for an education loan that could have led to a potential debt trap.

Transitioning to college life brought initial uncertainties for Amit as he navigated through a new environment and faced intense academic demands. However, he quickly found support from seniors and classmates, thus easing his transition. Throughout his BTech program, Amit continued to excel in his studies, with 7.86 GPA. Currently in his 4th year, Amit recently secured a campus placement with Ultimate Kronos, boasting an impressive salary package of Rs. 15 lacs per annum.

Grateful for the scholarship, Amit extends his heartfelt appreciation to his donor, Arpan Foundation, for their valuable contribution to his journey. This program has not only made education accessible but has also equipped him with various skills through FFE's Skills Training and Mentorship Program. While focused on achieving personal success, he envisions a future where he can contribute to the betterment of society.

Amit's journey exemplifies the transformative power of education and the pivotal role that scholarship and mentorship programs play in shaping the destinies of brilliant scholars.

SCHOLAR TESTIMONIALS

Shubham Chheta

**BTech, 4th Year
Information Technology
G H Patel College of Engineering & Technology,
Gujarat**



inFocus

"The Coursera program provided by FFE has been instrumental in shaping my academic journey and success. Through these courses, I have gained a comprehensive understanding of fundamental subjects crucial for my college exams. The structured approach of the courses helped me grasp complex concepts with clarity and depth, enabling me to excel in my college exams. Moreover, the knowledge and high quality content offered by Coursera significantly contributed to my success in achieving an All-India Rank (AIR) of 3251 in the GATE exam in computer science.

The flexibility of the online platform enabled me to balance my academic commitments with the coursework seamlessly. The interactive nature of the courses, coupled with practical assignments and assessments, facilitated a deeper understanding of the subject matter. The Coursera program offered by FFE has been a transformative experience. Hands-on projects and case studies offered valuable insights into industry best practices and emerging trends thus empowering me to pursue my career goals with confidence."

Thummala Kethana

**BTech, 2nd Year
Electronics and Communication Engineering
Gokaraju Rangaraju Institute of Engineering
and Technology
Hyderabad**



"I have been using the Enguru app to enhance my English Language skills. The interactive assignments helped me to practice my language skills that covered a range of topics from grammar, to written and spoken english. The practical exercises and real-world applications through interactive sessions have helped me enhance my communication skills and boost my confidence. The online platform is user-friendly, and the resources provided were comprehensive, aiding in a holistic understanding of the subject matter. The self paced program gave the flexibility to plan the sessions based on our college schedule."

4. ALUMNUS



Saravanan Arumugam

**Systems and Infrastructure Engineering,
LinkedIn
Sunnyvale, California**

I come from a family of six, living in a town called Neduvayal in the Tenkasi district of TamilNadu. My parents, two sisters, and grandmother were my first role models. Even though we had difficulties, my dad, who's great at cooking, worked different jobs to support us. He had to start working when he was only eight because of our family situation. My mother helped by working in a beedi factory to make ends meet.

Witnessing their relentless efforts to ensure my education despite financial struggles, I felt compelled to join the workforce early on to alleviate the family's financial burdens. Pursuing dreams of higher education seemed unattainable amidst the challenges that loomed at home. However, my trajectory changed when I learned about the FFE scholarship through Amar Seva Sangam, Aaikudi.

With this newfound support, I embarked on a journey that led me to pursue a B.Tech in Information Technology at one of Tamil Nadu's prestigious institutions, Government College of Technology in Coimbatore, TamilNadu. Following graduation, I transitioned into a career as a software developer, eventually landing a role as an Infrastructure Engineer at LinkedIn.

In late 2021, I moved to the United States to pursue better career opportunities. Since then, Sunnyvale, California has been my home.

I am profoundly grateful to FFE and Amar Seva Sangam for their pivotal role in supporting my education at a critical juncture in my life.

As long as my faculties permit, I am committed to giving back as a donor to FFE, ensuring that others receive the same invaluable support that shaped my journey.



5. DONOR FEATURE



Brij Seth
Florida, USA

inFocus

“I have known The Foundation for Excellence since 2016, when I began looking for an organization that promotes and supports the education of bright but financially disadvantaged undergraduate students in India. I wanted to fund some scholarships in India to honor my parents who valued education very highly and did their best to facilitate my education despite their very weak financial situation. Their dedicated efforts enabled me to achieve the best possible undergraduate education in India and postgraduate education abroad.

After reading about FFE on the internet, I contacted them to learn more about their mission, strategy, organization and accomplishments. I found my goal and their mission to be in perfect harmony. We immediately started discussions with FFE staff and executives about my goal of establishing an Endowment Fund for the perpetual support of four undergraduate students annually.

What I particularly like about FFE is that it is not just interested in providing financial assistance to bright, needy students but actually helps students to develop the soft skills required to make them more attractive to potential employers and command much higher starting salaries.

Another aspect that makes FFE stand out is that it maintains contact with its scholarship recipients both while they are in college and after graduation. This effort is critically important to creating a motivated pool of potential donors. Many alumni have become active supporters and donate to FFE as their financial situation permits.

While FFE’s headquarters are in the USA, the highly motivated capable staff in India brings the Organization’ mission to reality. They

select excellent candidates , facilitate the growth of their soft skills and most importantly, raise funds to support the ever increasing number of worthy scholars.

My best wishes for the continued success of this very valuable organization.”

Sincerely,

Brij Seth

Dr Brij Behari Lal Seth was born In Udaipur, in 1938. He completed his BSc. in Udaipur and his BE at the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore. In 1961, he left India with a research scholarship to pursue his MASc and PhD at the University of Toronto, Canada.

After graduation, he worked for a Specialty Steel company in Canada, then joined the Westinghouse Electric Corporation in the USA to lead development of Advanced Power Generation Materials. He held executive positions with Westinghouse and Siemens after Siemens took over Westinghouse.

Dr. Seth has published more than 50 technical articles and holds 25 patents. A very active member of the American Society of Metals, Brij was named a Fellow of the Society and recipient of its prestigious William Hunt Eisenman Award.

After retirement, Brij has been financially supporting the higher education of talented but economically disadvantaged students in India. He has established permanent Merit Scholarship Endowment for undergraduate scholarships at the Foundation for Excellence and for advanced graduate research scholarships at the Indian Institute of Science in Bangalore. The endowment model he developed with FFE in 2016 has proven to be very successful.

The Heartwarming Journey of LHMC Alumni Donors

In 2000, Dr. Kumkum Bhasin took the first step in a remarkable journey by adopting a student from Lady Hardinge Medical College (LHMC). Later that year, a Zoom meeting inspired six members of the Lady Hardinge Medical College Alumni Association of North America (LHMCAANA) to support LHMC students, paving the way for a heartening alliance.

Over the past four years, 28 dedicated LHMCAANA members have contributed \$329,600 to generously sponsor 32 LHMC medical students. Seventeen of these students benefit from perpetual scholarships established by donors in memory of their loved ones.

LHMCAANA donors gather annually for virtual meetings with their sponsored students. These heartfelt interactions bring immense joy as donors witness the transformative impact of their support, enabling deserving students to pursue their dreams. These meetings foster gratitude and reinforce the profound influence of generosity and mentorship.



Dr. Madhu Ahluwalia
New York, USA

One such donor, Dr. Madhu Ahluwalia, shares her inspiring story. Growing up in humble circumstances - her parents were divorced, and her schoolteacher mother earned a meager salary - Dr. Ahluwalia secured admission to LHMC with a merit scholarship in 1971. Inspired by her own journey and a promise to her late mother, she was determined to give back and support other students eager to join the institution that "changed her life."

"I just feel that I'm indebted to Harding. If I can change somebody's life with that, what more do you want?" Dr. Ahluwalia has encouraged many friends to follow suit and support LHMC students, emphasizing the importance of women supporting one another.

Dr. Ahluwalia appreciates the Foundation for Excellence (FFE)'s role in facilitating her giving. The organization's background checks and matching program have earned her gratitude for their professionalism and hands-on approach. She also admires the perpetual nature of the scholarship, as it allows her to help a new student every four years, once her previous sponsee graduates.

Dr. Ahluwalia hopes the students she supports will be inspired to contribute to perpetual scholarships of their own, continuing the cycle of generosity.

In her words, "For me, it was a very personal journey. If people want to make a change in a young woman's life, supporting her medical degree is a great way to do that."

6. FACILITATOR FEATURE

Ms. Ananthalakshmi Seshadrinathan, Chennai, Tamil Nadu

Ms. Ananthalakshmi Seshadrinathan a second generation volunteer Facilitator at FFE, following the footsteps of her late father, Mr. Lakshminarayan, who was a Facilitator with FFE from 2011-2022. She was introduced to FFE by her father, whose residence was close to the Madras Institute of Technology (MIT-Chennai), took on the task of verifying students economic background and scholarship eligibility criteria for MIT students. Following his untimely demise, his wife Ms. Rajalakshmi Narayanan took over the task briefly. In 2022, their daughter Ms. Ananthlakshmi, an entrepreneur took on the duties of Facilitator as she was both familiar with FFE's scholarship Program and had witnessed the transformational journey of many scholars.

In a short period of 2 years, she has evaluated and recommended 68 FFE scholars. Ms. Seshadrinathan finds this process to be incredibly gratifying and it gives her immense pleasure to contribute to the journey of financially disadvantaged students.

Ms. AnanthaLakshmi quotes the overflowing Kettle to be synonymous with the Circle of Giving model at FFE.

"I consider FFE; the organization as a kettle, hot milk being the donations from souls who have a kind heart. The team brings in donors by approaching them to fill the kettle, they also bring in the empty cups, who are the eligible candidates. The mentors, career



inFocus

counselors, skill developers act as the tea, coffee and sugar to make the drink i.e education perfect for the candidates to sip along, added ingredients like the ability to communicate with, choose the right career and skills. With the acquired education and skills, one starts producing abundance. Instead of letting it overflow, they start filling the cups of other candidates. The Facilitators are the spout of the kettle. We examine the cup - the credibility of the candidate, their need for finance and get them filled."

Her educational background includes an M.Phil. in Commerce, ICMA (intermediate), and a PGD in Application Programming. Her passion for diverse fields led her to pursue a PGD in fashion designing and thereafter she became a certified art teacher through Fevicryl. Additionally, she is also a published author of three self-help books available on Amazon Kindle.

Ms. Ananthalakshmi prioritizes empowering women through her writing and also teaches fashion designing, art and craft and painting through her online platform, Sreenidhi Creations. She is also a mentor and career guide in Project Purti, an initiative by AVTAR Human Capital Trust aimed at fostering career intentionality among underprivileged girls. She has also been featured in a prominent women's magazine as a motivating entrepreneur.

Ms. Ananthalakshmi, is a dedicated homemaker, entrepreneur and volunteers at various NGOs, while maintaining a healthy work-life balance, remarks "I am very proud of my association with FFE and the work they do. I wish all the students the very best for their future."

7. MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

FFE's Mentorship cycle in FY 2023-24 for Engineering students concluded recently drawing professionals from over **100+** corporations who provided mentoring and guidance to **1949** FFE Engineering (BE/BTech) Scholars. Mentors spent an average **24** hours, guiding scholars on career readiness, during the **4-6** month mentoring engagement. It is encouraging that 70% of the Mentor-Mentee pairs completed the mandatory 4 mentoring modules on soft skills & the remaining pairs have covered 1-3 modules in the program.

In February 2024, FFE conducted 4 group mentoring sessions for engineering students who could not participate in the mentoring program. The following topics were addressed in the group mentoring sessions: Communication Skills, Time Management, Career Development, Problem Solving and Decision Making.

FFE is thankful to the speakers- **Ms. Nimisha Rana**, CHRO at Alvarez & Marsal India Pvt. Ltd., **Mr. Venugopal Mudhaliar**, Senior Director(AVP) - Risk and Business Continuity, Firstsource, **Ms. Shalina Nandiwada**, Technical Delivery Manager, Microsoft and **Mr. Santoshkumar Pati**, Staff Technical Program Manager, Lam Research for participating and offering their guidance.

Following program completion, FFE collected feedback from Mentors and Mentees to gain a better understanding of their overall mentoring experience and to identify areas of improvement, to assimilate detailed program insights and qualitative feedback,

FFE held a series of **Focused Group Discussions (FGD)** with sample groups of mentees and mentors who had enrolled in FFE's mentorship program this year. The quantitative and qualitative insights gathered from both the sources will be shared with all the participating corporate partners.

The ongoing Mentorship program for FFE's Law (LLB) and Pharmacy (BPharm) students started in December 2023 and will end in June 2024. Currently, 45 law Mentor-Mentee pairs and 56 BPharm Mentor-Mentee pairs are part of the program. Individual Lawyers and returning mentors (from previous years) are part of the Law program. Similarly, employee volunteers from Novartis India Limited, Clarivate, Amneal Pharmaceuticals, Dr. Reddy's Laboratories, Biocon Biologics have registered as Mentors in the BPharma mentoring program.

FFE once again is thankful to the numerous corporate employee volunteers, FFE's Alumni mentors and individuals for their participation in FFE's mentorship program. FFE will look to your continued support in the upcoming **Mentoring Program 2024-25, starting June 2024!**

Mentorship Program FY 23-24 Summary

Course	Number of Mentor-Mentee Pair
Engineering (BE/BTech)	1848
Law(LLB)	45
Pharmacy (BPharm)	56
Total Mentor-Mentee Pairs	1949

Virtual sessions with Mercedes-Benz Research & Development India (MBRDI) Leaders on 23rd March 2024



Session I- Career Planning & Goal setting with MBRDI Mentors

On 23rd March, Mercedes-Benz Research & Development India (MBRDI) curated a one-time virtual mentorship opportunity with its women employees serving as mentors to FFE's women scholars on the topics: Career Planning and Goal Setting & Women in Technology.

63 MBRDI mentors participated in these 2 sessions, where mentors and mentees were divided into small breakout rooms for closer interaction. In this interactive session, 55+ FFE women students participated and interacted closely with their assigned mentors.



Session II- Women in Technology with MBRDI Mentors

MENTOR-MENTEE TESTIMONIAL

MENTOR TESTIMONIAL



**Ms. Meena Sharma,
Senior Manager- Transitions,
Wipro Technologies, Mumbai**

I chose to be a mentor because I enjoy helping others learn and grow. I find fulfillment in sharing my knowledge and experiences to support and guide others on their journey. FFE's mentorship program has been an incredibly rewarding one. It was very fulfilling to see my mentee gain confidence and overcome his challenges. Additionally, it provided me an opportunity for personal growth, as I could also refine my communication skills, gain new perspectives, and learn from my mentee's experiences as well. Overall, it has been a mutually beneficial relationship that has fostered learning, growth, and meaningful connection. It has given me the time out to reflect/introspect on my experiences and knowledge and the satisfaction to contribute in a small way to someone's growth.

Our knowledge & experiences hold great value and by volunteering as a mentor, one can make a positive impact on deserving students' lives and also contribute to the growth of society. It will also help you to learn and grow and expand your network too.

MENTEE TESTIMONIAL



**Rohit Raj
BTech, 3rd Year Textile Technology,
IIT DELHI**

"My mentor and I recently concluded the FFE mentorship program, which was really helpful. It was overall a great experience, as my mentor shared her professional and personal experience while guiding me through the various soft skills modules for better understanding. My favorite module was Communication Skills. I always struggled in putting my thoughts to words, but my mentor helped me with some very useful tips on improving my communication skills and I feel much more confident now. Thank you to my mentor and FFE for this incredible program."

8. SKILL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Cohort	Training Programs	No. of scholars	Supported by
2022-23 (2nd Year Engineering Scholars)	English Training-Enguru	1,787	MSDF* & Lenovo
	Aptitude Training-Ethnus	1,319	
2021-22 (3rd Year Engineering Scholars)	Technical Skilling – Coursera	1,738	MSDF* and Capgemini
	Hi-Touch English	1,074	
	Mock Interviews - SHL	2228	
B.Pharma (2nd Year)	Technical Skilling – Coursera	70	Mr. Chirag Patel & Mr. Kanu Bhai Patel Markit India Services Pvt.Ltd.(S&P Global) MSDF*
	English Training-Enguru	83	Mr. Chirag Patel & Mr. Kanu Bhai Patel Markit India Services Pvt.Ltd.(S&P Global)
LLB (2nd Year)	Coursera	50	Mr. Mahesh Krishnamurthy Markit India Services Pvt.Ltd.(S&P Global)
	English Training-Enguru	42	
Medical (2nd & 3rd year)	Hi-Touch English	10	Mr. Babu Joseph

MSDF* - Michael and Susan Dell Foundation

OTHER SKILLING INITIATIVES

Finding the Leader in You Program (FLY)

Finding the Leader in You (FLY) is a 12-day leadership workshop that started in 2021. 1373 FFE scholars have participated in this program since its commencement. During the last quarter, 140 students, in 4 batches, from 2nd Year of Engineering participated in the FLY Program.

The workshop is conducted by Competitiveness Mindset Institute Inc. in partnership with IIT- Gandhinagar and is designed to teach non cognitive skills, to enhance students' personality and for their character development. This program is generously sponsored by Mr. Ron Mehta, Philanthropist and IIT Bombay alumnus, and long term supporter of FFE.

Wadhvani Foundation's Job Ready Program

Wadhvani Foundation's Job Ready Program commenced in June 2023 with 500, 2nd year Engineering scholars registering for the 6 months program. The program's main goal is to help scholars develop employability and work-ready skills, necessary to gain internships and placement opportunities.

Weekly mentorship sessions and self-paced study modules accessible through a dedicated online portal made up the program's structure.

The goal of the mentoring sessions was to help participants get a deeper comprehension of the course material and to apply their learnings in real-world situations. During the program, scholars gained insights into teamwork, communication skills, corporate awareness, digital literacy, behavioral skills, problem-solving techniques, and more. The program concluded in January 2024 with the post assessment results being; 432 scholars completed the program with 367 of them scoring above 70%.

Webinar on Generative Artificial intelligence(AI) and Machine learning (ML)



Webinar hosted by
AWS for Engineering scholars

January 7th 2024, saw over 500 Engineering scholars attend a webinar “ Introduction to Generative AI and Machine Learning” hosted by the Amazon Web Services (AWS) team. The webinar provided insights into Machine Learning, Deep Learning, AI and Gen AI, Gen AI Foundation Models, and Gen AI Use cases in the Healthcare and Entertainment Industry. The session was presented by **Mr. Sanjay Nigohjkar**, Sr. Manager Solutions Architecture, AWS and was co-presented by **Mr. Tony Trinh**, Sr. Solutions Architect, AWS.

IBM Skills Build Certification Program



Over two thousand 2nd year Engineering scholars enrolled in the year-long IBM Skills Build Certification Program, which commenced in November 2023. The platform has curated content that includes IT-related modules like Cybersecurity, Artificial Intelligence, Agile Methodology, Data Analytics along with modules addressing Job-Readiness Skills and Professional Skills such as Resume Writing, Interview Handling, LinkedIn Profile, etc.

1,468 scholars have completed the self-paced learning course to date. The average learning time on the portal for this cohort has been observed to be 16 hours.

QMed Literature Searching Program for MBBS students

FFE collaborated with QMed Knowledge Foundation in November 2023 to offer the Medical Literature Search Program to 169 scholars from year 2 and year 3 of MBBS. This program offers skill sets required for online search of medical and allied health domains. Students have been actively participating in the 3 modules of the program, i.e. Information Resource and Literature searching, Introduction to Referencing and Mastering PubMed.



Mental Wellness Program

In November 2023, FFE in collaboration with Mpowerminds launched the year-long wellness program, open to all FFE scholars.

777 students have participated in the information workshops conducted weekly, gaining insights into identifying mental health issues and learning strategies to take remedial action.

The program is aimed at providing a positive mental health environment with the goal to eliminate the stigma associated with mental illness. This program involves onboarding students in batches for weekly workshops on mental health with access to a 24*7 helpline number to seek support whenever needed. Additionally, one-to-one counseling sessions (as needed) are also a part of the program.



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