Ahmedabad: After a gap of two years, the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad (IIM-A), has increased fees for its postgraduate programme (PGP) and agri-business management programme (ABM) from the current Rs16.6 lakh to Rs18.5 lakh. The fee for the postgraduate programme in management for executives (PGPX) is also being raised from Rs21.5 lakh to Rs24 lakh for the batch commencing April 2015.

Fiscal prudence requires long duration programmes for two years. For the FPM and FDP programmes, we have requested the government’s support so that these programmes do not burden other programmes,” said Ashish Nanda, director of IIM-A.

Nanda said that IIM-A has tried to cover the increasing costs by focusing on efficiency, reducing cross-subsidization of other programmes, support from executive education, increasing income from corpus, and intensifying fundraising.
IIM-A announces 11.44% fee hike, steepest in last 5 years

Citing inflationary pressures, the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad (IIM-A) has announced a fee hike of 11.44 per cent for its postgraduate programme in management (PGP) and the PGP food and agri-business management (FABM) for the 2015-17 batch. The fee hike will be the steepest in last five years.

The institute has announced the fee for its PGP and PGP-ABM programs will increase from the current ₹16.6 lakh to ₹18.5 lakh. The PGPX course fee is being raised from ₹21.5 lakh to ₹24 lakh for the batch commencing from April 2015.

According to IIM-A, since the earlier revision made for the 2013-15 batch, inflation has been on the rise and is projected at eight per cent for 2014.

The CPI inflation rate in India was 9.7 per cent in 2012 and 10 per cent in 2013.

"One of the other reasons we are hiking the fee is to remain financially autonomous. We believe those students who go on to grow in their career after studying here should be the ones bearing the cost of IIM-A education, as opposed to the tax payers," said Ashish Nanda, director of IIM-A.

To bring more diversity in the PGP and PGP-FABM programmes, the institute announced two major initiatives, including offering deferred admission to a subset of selected students, to give them an opportunity to work for a couple of years before joining IIM-A.

"Deferred admissions will encourage some of our bright admits, fresh out of college, to gain relevant work experience before joining the program so that they can benefit from, and contribute to, the PGP program even more than they would have otherwise," said Nanda.

The institute is also to offer seats over its present capacity to foreign students who want to join the PGP course. "Our objective is to get quality foreign students to bring in diversity, and also to position the institute as a global learning destination for management students," said Ajay Pandey, dean (programs).

The institute is mulling the rationalisation of GMAT cut-off to attract more foreign nationals.

"However, we will make sure the quality (of foreign nationals) is comparable to what is demanded of domestic candidates in the admission process," Nanda added.

The institute is also mulling following the ministry of human resource development's Direct Admissions of Students Abroad (DASA) scheme, which calls for setting aside additional seats for foreign nationals, equivalent to 10 per cent of the regular batch size. Both PGP and PGP-FABM put together, the current total batch size for both first and second year is roughly 860.

For the PGP and PGP-ABM programs, the tuition fee increase is 10 per cent, whereas administrative costs (for hostel, facilities, academic support, etc) have increased at a higher pace owing to inflation, resulting in a net increase of 11.44 per cent. The cumulative fee increase for all three programs, of the order of about 11.5 per cent, equates to about 3.7 per cent annual increase over the three years, the institute informed.

"Even as the institute raises its fees, we emphasise our commitment to providing generous financial aid and working intensively with financial institutions to make educational loans easily available, so as to ensure that capable students continue to be able to join IIMA irrespective of their financial means. We have tried to cover increasing costs by focusing on efficiency, reducing cross-subsidisation of other programs, support from executive education, increasing income from corpus, and intensifying fundraising," said Nanda.

Amidst increasing cost pressure, the institute has continued extending financial support to students. IIM-A disbursed financial aid of ₹7.55 crore to 295 students in 2012-13 and ₹6.94 crore to 242 students in 2013-14. IIM-A has also worked intensively with financial institutions such that currently several banks are offering incoming students loans covering all educational cost.

Meanwhile, Nanda stated certain changes are being made in PGP and other programs. For instance, as per PGP review committee's recommendations, the incoming batch of PGP 2015-17 will see introduction of new core courses like government systems and processes, understanding global organisational context, having an entrepreneurial mind-set, and experiencing integration, apart from allowing flexibility for students to specialise in specific domains (such as marketing, finance, and HR) on their meeting specified credit requirements in those domains.
Once bitten, HRD min wants MEA to okay global MoUs

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New Delhi: Learning from the MoU fiasco between Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan and the German government, the HRD ministry has issued instructions to various departments and autonomous bodies to get clearance of the ministry of external affairs (MEA) in future for “global partnership within the national interest”.

Exception is likely to be made in case of IITs as the Institutes of Technology Act, 1961, has a provision allowing them to have MoUs on faculty exchange and research projects.

Meanwhile, sources in the HRD ministry dismissed reports that Kendriya Vidyalayas will continue to allow students studying German will be allowed to complete the course in this academic session. Officials said the decision to discontinue German is final and students will not be affected.

Detailed instructions have been issued both by the departments of school and higher education for partnerships in education. The note of the department of higher education says there is need for a uniform system. It says in case of faculty exchange programmes and research projects partnerships, higher education institutions “should always refer to general advisory about countries that the MEA may have in the context of national interest”.

The ministry has also instructed that in case of foreign educational institutions setting up campus in India, information should be given in advance with MoU before it is brought up before the Board of Governors or the finance committee.

‘KVs to continue offering German’

The Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan (KVS) on Monday clarified that Kendriya Vidyalayas will continue to offer German (foreign) language. The letter from the joint commissioner (training) Dr Shachi Kant stated students of classes VI to VIII can continue to opt for the German language as an additional subject or as a hobby class. According to an official of KVS, Sanskrit is being introduced as the third language and there is no change in that status. The clarification has been given as schools have started the process of sacking German teachers. “We want to clarify to the schools that there is no need to fire any teacher teaching German as the language will be offered as additional subject,” an official said. TTN

For the full report, log on to www.timesofindia.com
India-US Higher Education Dialogue held


New Delhi: The third India-US Higher Education Dialogue, held here Monday, emphasised the key role of education and skills development in relationships between the people of the two countries.

"The two sides reiterated the importance of the Higher Education Dialogue to promote enhanced opportunities for student and scholar mobility and faculty collaboration between the United States and India, including our ongoing collaboration on community colleges," said a statement.

Both sides affirmed the importance of ongoing community college collaborations to meet Prime Minister Modi`s national skills development goals.

They also encouraged the bi-national Task Force on Community Colleges that was convened earlier in the day to develop a plan for implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding signed between the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) and the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC).

Empowering women to leadership positions

Corporate India and government agencies must take cognizance of the challenges that women face at the workplace

MOORTY KUMARAVANI

Gender diversity at the workplace is a pertinent issue across the world, more so in India, where women are slowly holding leadership positions. Baby boomers changed the workplace demographics from homogeneity to diversity.

Gender diversity could be the next big trend in the evolution of the corporate workforce. The last decade has witnessed workplace diversity in both private and public sectors, with human resource leaders waking up to the realization that this is not only a help in creating an unbiased workplace environment, but it has also proven business impact. A few companies in India have already demonstrated how women can be integral to their workforce by reducing the ratio between men and women. In general, the Services segment and specific sectors such as IT, Financial Services, Media, Health care, and Hospitality have been torchbearers in bridging the gender divide. Also, with many Indian companies going global and global companies entering India, diversity became a key trend.

However, to keep the momentum going, corporate India and the government agencies must take cognizance of the challenges that women face. A lot more needs to be done to sustain and accelerate this impact. Typically, working women in India have to balance their professional demands with various domestic needs. Crucial to improving women's representation at the workplace is accommodating their career lifecycle and creating policies that will encourage more women entering or re-entering the workforce. Also, women entrepreneurs can benefit immensely from favourable government policies, training programmes and access to financial support and working capital.

Roadblocks

The single biggest deterrent for working women is the expectation to compromise on their career in order to fulfill family commitments. A number of women take a break in their professional life or work part-time owing to this. As a result, their career momentum is impacted and when they re-enter the workforce, they often have to contend with lesser pay. Studies show that at the start of their career, women are usually offered the same pay as men but over a period of time, as they are about to reach mid and senior positions, which typically coincide with their critical domestic needs, they tend to hit a glass ceiling. For example, women employees who come back after their maternity breaks find it challenging to balance their career and motherhood; this sometimes results in women having to prioritize one over another. Preconceived notions about assigning women's suitability for specific roles are also a challenge. Workplace harassment is another issue. Studies show that these challenges become bigger as women scale the corporate ladder.

Barriers

Other prominent barriers to women's career advancement are lack of mentoring, networking opportunities, lack of transparency in roles and expectations, absence of a clear career path, unavailability of relevant platforms to uphold their expertise and exclusion from informal male-dominated networks.

As of today, the positive impact is evident with more women leaders driving strategy and framing policy, while women entrepreneurs become role models. If government agencies and the corporate world come together, it will not be long before India witnesses an era where there is a robust entrepreneurial network among women, fostering economic growth and sustaining business traction. Studies also reveal that women in leadership roles in an organization can make a transformational difference to its performance. As an analysis of return on equity (ROE) data of top 100 Indian companies (BSE 100) by Bandstand reveals that companies with women on their boards have a positive impact on ROE.

Diversity in the Board is a business imperative. A government-mandated quota may help create the cause of diversity as it provides a standard and uniform guideline. However, a quota may not help a company build depth or sustain the policy. If there is a commitment to fill seats, companies should be true to the intent and make appointments accordingly. Although the quota for women directors is aimed at promoting diversity, the denigration and rigour that women professionals of display, goes to show that merit will shine through even without reservations. Building a pipeline of women at the executive level is the need of the hour, and it can be achieved over a period of time through well-structured efforts of both corporates and the government.

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INNOVATION

Do we glorify the tech industry’s past, dismiss its present?

History has a way of focusing on the greats and filtering out the rest. But there’s more.

WALTER ISAACS

In the second episode of Walt and Chuck Five, AMC’s new show about the birth of personal computers, the protagonist encourages his two co-founders—a hardware engineer and a coder—to quit a recent set and keep working to build a new kind of PC. “I thought that maybe we could do this precisely because we’re all unreasonable people,” he tells them, borrowing from George Bernard Shaw’s “And the poor depend on our changes, by working the world to fix, but the other way around.” That logic perfectly sums up how we regard technology’s past. Looking through the now-defunct industry, we see only bonanzas and geniuses. But flip the channels and fast-forward 30 years to IDEO “Silicon Valley” and present-day tech entrepreneurship is portrayed in a very different light. These characters care more about ideas they can make relevant rather than ideas they do about truly world-changing innovation. The same was true when setting his company to Google for $650 million. “We’re making the world a better place throughinnovating an elegant hierarchy for maximum code reuse and extensibility.”

Consider the Intel Flurry. Michael Malone’s now history of the company, the and the investors, Walts Isaacson, who “set the world ablaze” by creating the competing industry. These are heroic tales, exemplified by a story that both authors tell about Intel’s Robert Noyce. In October 1999, the legendary engineer and entrepreneur testified before his colleagues in the United States for a hearing and, on a tour through the Bay Area, offered a bold prediction concerning the impact of his company’s work. Holding Intel’s new 604e microprocessor, he said, “This is going to change the world. It’s going to revolutionize your home—you’ll have all computers. You will have access to all sort of information…” to happen electronically.

Of course, he was right. Noyce, Intel co-founder Gordon Moore, and all the others profited by Malone and Isaacson did invent our future, so it’s no surprise that we want to gaze back at them in admiration.

Startup life

No, but then a new book by Cideon Le- won—whose, expertly captures the mundane grind of startup life in today’s Silicon Valley—does offer a candidly less inspiring narrative. It centers on Bootstraps, a fledgling video discovery site that, when that idea didn’t work, morphed into a media recommendation engine for businesses. The founders are earnest and capable, and the product is appealingly straightforward, but the long odds of their industry. But there’s nothing spectacular about them or their company, and that’s precisely the point. They came from a startup incubator, not a lab or a garage. They focus on viable business models, not scientific research and development. And even though they may not be making diminishing profits, one answer is that history has a way of filtering out the winners and focusing on the greats. That may not be part of the explanation, but there’s more to it.

Smaller innovations?

Despite the current pace of technological change, it’s hard to shake the feeling that today’s new products and processes are smaller than the innovations we saw 20 or 30 years ago. The companies have fewer employees and barely push the boundaries of basic or even applied science. The idea that get hooked and funded are apps manifesting as platform, platforms manifesting as breakthroughs.

A big reason for that is the much heralded dematerialization of entrepreneurship. Today you can start a technology business. It’s cheaper, easier, and thanks to the booming venture capital industry, a glut of angel investors and crowdfunding websites like Kickstarter, it has per

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