

Dear Students,

I hope that your family and you are keeping safe and healthy at home.

The Academic Calendar for the Year 2020-21 has been drawn and we will commence this academic year on **August 20th, 2020**. The initial classes will start in online blended format due to the prevailing situation and we're simultaneously working in the background to begin on-campus instruction as early as mid-September. You will soon receive detailed timetables from respective schools in a day or two.

Preparatory arrangements are being made to make GITAM campuses, including hostels, safe and ready for use of students, non-teaching staff and faculty by taking all necessary precautions. We are closely monitoring the situation and will be flexible enough to make necessary adjustments in line with prevailing situation and guidelines issued by the governments both at the Centre and in the State.

I am happy to inform you that we have been preparing for adoption of blended learning as the new normal during both Covid and post-Covid periods for achieving effective learning. I am positive that you all agree with us that **blended learning** is not a temporary solution, but rather a new and improved way of teaching and learning that will stay with us in the foreseeable future. Many of us have a misconception that blended learning is online teaching. Blended Learning is about leveraging technology to change pedagogy and adopting a more student-centric model of learning. It is focused on improving the overall effectiveness of learning and is not a mere substitution of offline classes by online classes.

With our immediate attention being focused on online teaching, we're investing hugely in our online capabilities – these include procuring premium Zoom classroom licenses, signing up new vendors for hosting online exams, getting a new LMS, developing in-house software and training our faculty for effective online teaching.

We acknowledge that you may not have had an ideal online learning experience in last few weeks of the previous academic year. We heard you and are committed to

providing you with better and better online learning experiences going forward as our faculty adapt to the new format well.

As you're aware we've partnered with Coursera since April. The idea behind investing substantially in the Coursera For Campus program, was to offer to our students more diverse learning opportunities and access to courses from top universities in the world. We also expect our faculty to learn good practices in teaching from best instructors in the world. Of the 20,000 licenses we signed up for, we will provide all the first movers in students with a free Coursera license this year. From the following year, we will study your consumption and change the model accordingly to ensure that the motivated students get access to it. Since our total user base is about 30,000 including staff and students, we can only allocate to the 20,000 who make good use of the platform.

I am also pleased to inform you that examination results of all non-final year students in their II, IV or VI semesters in the disciplines of Engineering, Management, Sciences, Humanities & Social Sciences, and Architecture have been finalized and most of these have already been communicated to students. A few remaining examination results will be announced during the course of this week. As communicated earlier, for students who wish to improve their grades, an opportunity will be provided to take the examinations at a later date. The semester-wise supplementary exams for backlog subjects for all outgoing batches are being conducted and the results are being announced concurrently.

For all of you who lack the necessary devices or connectivity to learn online at home and are looking for a safe place to learn, please lookout for communication about our preparations to make campuses and hostels safe places for you to return.

If you have any questions and are in need of any help, do not hesitate to reach out to us at help@gitam.edu.

With Best Wishes,
VICE CHANCELLOR