Note from the Managing Trustee:

Dear Friends and Supporters,

The Foundation For Excellence (FFE) had an exciting FY 2017-18, with increasing numbers of students being awarded FFE’s merit and means scholarships. FFE ended the year awarding scholarships to 1144 first time scholars and 3,802 scholarships to renewal students. In total, 4,946 students were awarded scholarship totalling Rs. 20,71,70,472/- making this a record year for the Foundation in its 24 year history. This also meant that students were taking steps towards fulfilling their dreams of a professional education. FFE is thankful to all the volunteer Facilitators for the important role they play in both identifying qualifying candidates and meeting students and their families to determine financial eligibility for FFE’s scholarship.

FFE also launched 2 important programs during the FY- Skills Training and an in house Mentoring Program. Both programs were focussed towards the end goal of employability of all scholars and enabling them to maximize their potential. Supported by a generous grant from the Michael and Susan Dell Foundation, the Skills Program was designed to ensure that every Engineering FFE scholar has an opportunity to acquire the necessary skills (soft skills and other employability skills) to prepare them to face new challenges as they seek employment, enter the civil services, seek entrepreneurship opportunities or pursue higher education. The pilot In-house Mentoring Program was successfully launched in October 2017 with about 100 students being matched to industry experts who served the role of a mentor. Both programs have seen strong participation from the student community and the need to scale the mentoring program is now a strong felt need.

FFE continues to interact with students and alumni, donors and volunteers at the Open House events held in different locations. Our donor base continues to expand-including record numbers of alumni donating to FFE along with new corporate partners. I feel humbled by the increasing number of supporters who have chosen to participate in this journey of transformation. FFE today is stronger than ever due to our continually expanding community who comes together to donate resources, time, and talent in support of FFE’s mission. FFE’s dedicated team, led ably by FFE’s dynamic COO Sandhya Manoj, has worked tirelessly to implement our programs successfully.

I am thankful to FFE’s leadership team (including Trustees in India and the FFE –USA Board) for their strong support of our programs. As we move to the next fiscal and beyond, I feel humbled and proud of what FFE accomplished in FY 2017-18 and am excited about the future. My heartfelt thanks to each one of you for your strong support of our mission. Our community of supporters is strong and vibrant, and together, we will continue our efforts to make a difference and bring about a transformation in many young lives.

Sincerely,
Sudha Kidao,
Managing Trustee, FFE India Trust
News & Events

I. Open House Event - IIT Gandhinagar

FFE organized its last Open House for the FY in IIT Gandhinagar, Gujarat on 11th January 2018. Mr. Atul Kulshreshtha (VP/Head, Business Services (India) & CBS, Capgemini, India) was the Guest of Honour. Scholarship cheques amounting to Rs. 12.89 lakhs were awarded to 33 scholars. This event saw the participation of our donors- representing both corporates and a Foundation.

Mr. Nakul Vachhrajani from Capgemini conducted a special session for the students on Styles of Communication and a parallel workshop was held for MBBS students conducted by Dr. Elavatsala Sharma and Dr. Saurabh Shah. Topics discussed included time management, study habits and prioritization of tasks and various career options to consider.

FFE’s donor, A World of Opportunity (AWOO) Foundation was represented by Ms. Nupur Joshi (Gen. Manager-Human Resources, Group HR) and Ms. Suhina Roy. The AWOO team first headed to B J Medical College, Ahmedabad for an informal interaction with the third year medical scholars who could not travel to Gandhinagar due to their University examinations. The AWOO team conducted a session on Interview Techniques and GD session conducted by the AWOO team.

Ms. Nupur Joshi awarding a scholarship cheque to an FFE scholar.

Interview Techniques and GD session conducted by the AWOO team.

FFE alumnus Mr. Piyush Kothiya sharing his journey with FFE

Breakout session on Styles of Communication by Mr. Nakul Vachhrajani from Capgemini
Techniques and Group Discussion for the Indus AWOO - FFE scholars and 4th year Engineering Scholars during the Open House. The session included Group Discussions between groups of students being conducted, with immediate feedback provided by the HR experts from AWOO. More than 35 Indus-AWOO-FFE scholars from Surat travelled to Gandhinagar to participate in the Open House and interact with their donors. FFE is thankful to all the participants, particularly representatives from Capgemini and AWOO for their support and participation.

II. Community Outreach

Mentoring Program

One of FFE’s goal is to ensure that all its scholars have opportunities to pursue their dreams. The role of industry experts who can serve as mentors to FFE scholars is of tremendous interest. In October 2017, FFE launched its pilot, in-house, Mentoring Program for FFE’s third year Engineering scholars. The Program launch began with 44 students across 30 colleges in 32 cities who were paired with mentors from Axtria India Private Limited (Gurgaon), Hewlett Packard Enterprise (Bangalore) and Intel Technology India Private Limited (Bangalore). Participating students were matched with mentors based on their course of study, language, gender and general interests. Currently, there are over 120 active mentor-mentee pairs in FFE’s Mentoring program and the participating numbers continue to grow.

"The program is an excellent one as it bridges the gap between corporates and students. As an individual I have attained education from multiple esteemed institutions, however it is of limited use if I utilize it only for my own corporate job. Getting an opportunity to share knowledge with students from this generation who are extremely keen and perceptive makes me feel more happy as I am able to add value to someone’s career and to society overall.”
- Kunal Bagaria, Mentor (Intel Technology India Pvt. Ltd.)

Skill Development and Job Readiness Program

FFE launched a 3-month app-based English training program in September 2017 for all second year Engineering scholars. The program utilized e-learning mobile app platforms Hello English and Kings Learning. One thousand 2nd year FFE Engineering scholars actively participated in the program which concluded in December 2017. Post assessment evaluation revealed nearly 60% of students who took the test showed marked improvement in their English language skills. Before the start of the program, students completed the AMCAT (Aspiring Minds Computer Adaptive Test) as a pre-assessment tool to measure their skill level. This same cohort will complete a post-assessment AMCAT in May-June 2018.

FFE had also rolled out an app-based Aptitude training program using two platforms – FACE (Focus Academy for Career Enhancement) and Pariksha – for over 700 students from this same cohort. Initiated in January 2018, students will complete this program in April 2018. FFE is thankful to the Michael and Susan Dell Foundation (MSDF) for their grant to support the Skill Development Program for these students and for the new, first year Engineering cohort.

FFE Scholar bags 1st prize at national level Innovation Competition 2018

Govind Bajpai, second year Electronics and Communication Engineering student from NIT Uttarakhand won the first position at the national level Innovation Competition held from 14-15 February, 2018 at NIT Uttarakhand. Govind along with three other team members presented his model of a ‘Flying Drone’ designed to help

Nitin with his mentor Vijay from Intel
the farming community. Out of 15 impressive entries from teams from the various IITs and NITs, Govind and his team won the competition with a prize money of Rs. 1 lakh.

Govind comes from a farmer’s family and having understood the challenges faced by the agricultural community in his region, he and his team designed the Farming Assistant Drone. His model was widely appreciated by the jury and will now be proposed for further advancement and innovation. FFE is indeed proud of Govind’s achievement and the recognition his invention has won him.

**FFE Scholars at Summer Research Internship Program (SRIP) 2018, IIT Gandhinagar**

Congratulations to 4 FFE scholars who were selected for a 2-month residential summer internship at IIT-Gandhinagar in June-July 2018. Chinna Vishwanath Bhusaraddi (BMS College of Engineering, Bangalore), Nitesh Kumar Shaw (NIT Jamshedpur), Satish M (MIT, Chennai) and Subarna Sadhukhan (NIT, Durgapur) will be part of the Institute’s 6th edition of the Summer Research Internship Program. 6 FFE scholars have been part of this program in 2015 and 2016. The internship program aims at fostering strong ties and partnerships between IIT-Gandhinagar and other institutions, bringing students and faculty from premier institutes across the country to participate in ongoing research projects.

FFE is thankful to IIT-Gandhinagar for their partnership and in making this opportunity available to FFE Scholars.

**III. New Corporate Donors/Partners**

FFE is delighted with the support of our new partners Arcesium India Private Limited, Bajaj Allianz General Insurance Co. Ltd., Bajaj Auto Ltd., Broadcom Communications Technologies Private Limited, First Source Solutions Ltd., ISG Novasoft Technologies Limited, Watumull Foundation and A.T.E. Chandra Philanthropic Foundation. Our current corporate donors have renewed their partnership with FFE, funding not only current students but sponsoring additional students. We thank our new as well as continuing corporate donors and individuals for their generous support.

**International Women’s Day 2018 at Intel India, Bangalore**

With the 2018 UN theme for International Women’s Day being “Time is Now: Rural and Urban Activists Transforming Women’s Lives”, Intel India through its Employee Engagement Initiative, Intel Involved, organized an event on 9th March 2018 inviting FFE women scholars to participate.

FFE scholars at the Intel Women’s Day Event

The one-day event focused on enhancing employability skills in the areas of Change Management & Communication for women engineering students. Ten FFE women scholars participated in the event along with other invitees, with more than 35 Intel employee volunteers participating. Co-facilitated by Intel Involved volunteers and Continuing Education & Training Centre (CETC), the program featured two main participatory sessions - transformation of an individual into a professional by Satyesh Bellur (Senior VP, Tejas Networks Limited) and communication skills by Rajalakshmi...
Jayaraman (Regional Director - South, CETC).

FFE is thankful to Intel for the unique opportunity made possible for FFE’s women Engineering scholars in Bangalore.

Cisco Workshop, Bangalore

Cisco Systems India Private Limited initiated a series of workshops for FFE’s Engineering scholars in Bangalore during 2017-18. Under an umbrella topic titled, “The Project Connect Exposure Program for Engineering Scholars - A Deep Dive into Hardware Engineering”, five one-day workshops were held at Cisco Bangalore Campus during the year. The first two workshops held in 2017 were on Hardware and FPGA and Embedded Systems. The third workshop was on Product Validation, attended by 29 FFE scholars on 10th January 2018. With specific focus on mechanical engineering students, the fourth workshop (7th February 2018) was on Mechanical Engineering - Overview. Twenty nine FFE scholars attended the fifth and final workshop (28th March 2018) on Interview Skills, Resume Building and Interview Simulation. Each workshop was organized by Cisco employee volunteers and facilitated by FFE. FFE is thankful to Cisco for the opportunities and engagement made possible for FFE scholars.

Job Readiness and Employability Workshop with AMDOCS in Pune and Gurgaon

FFE’s partner, Amdocs Development Centre India LLP organized a one-day workshop on March 15, 2018 on Corporate Readiness and Employability at their office for 12 FFE Engineering scholars studying in Pune. The Amdocs team led interactive sessions covering Telecom and Technology by Alok Agarwal (Senior Manager, Amdocs Intelligence Operations), Leadership by Devendra Jani (Product Owner, Amdocs Technology), Innovation Methodology by Leo Paulose, (Innovation Expert, Amdocs India) and How to tackle interviews by Amdocs’ India Re-
to be a part of this program and looks forward to a continued partnership with the institution.

Dr. Sudha Kidaoo, FFE IT’s Managing Trustee with Ruyintan Mehta, Donor (on left) and other board members of the IIT-B Alumni Association

Voice of Scholars

Current Scholar

Viknesh Kumar S
Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu

Viknesh is a 2nd year Mechanical Engineering student from Government College of Technology, Coimbatore. He lives with his mother and younger brother who is currently in Class 12. After Viknesh’s father passed away, the sole income earning member of the family is his mother who farms their small plot of land. This is his story:

IV. FFE in the News

New Scholarship for IIT-B Students: A partnership between IIT-B Alumni Association and FFE

The Erach & Meheroo Mehta Memorial - FFE Scholarship was launched in partnership with the IIT-Bombay Alumni Association, as part of its Financial Aid Program (FAP). This Scholarship Program is sponsored by erstwhile FFE Board member and US-based IIT-B alumnus Ruyintan Mehta in honor of his parents. His donation of Rs. 1.27 crores, will support students at IIT-Mumbai through merit cum means scholarships over a period of 4 years. FFE is excited
“My family is very supportive towards my education because one day after graduation, it will be my responsibility to take care of our household. Engineering was the first choice as it offered a lot of job opportunities, so my mother decided I should join an engineering course in college.

“Receiving the FFE scholarship meant every difference without which I would have definitely dropped out of college.”

I have wonderful memories of my days in school. Our Mathematics teacher Sir Kannan was always helpful and taught me how to work hard so I could become successful. I even received mentoring from the Principal of my school. From Class 10 to 12, we faced extreme financial difficulties where my parents could not afford to pay our school fees. In Class 11 and 12, the school offered to waive off half the fees while relatives contributed and arranged for the other half. Had they not helped, I would have definitely dropped out of school to find a job.

A year ago, there was no rain in our village. I was in the first year of college then and my family could not grow any crops thus unable to pay for my college fees. My uncle advised me to apply for the FFE scholarship and that is how I came to know about the Foundation. Receiving the FFE scholarship meant every difference without which I would have definitely dropped out of college. My brother and I are both studying now through scholarships.

I chose to study in a government college because they have a lower fee. The first semester in college was a challenge as I could not understand what was being taught as English was unfamiliar to me. But I worked hard and tried my best to pick up what was taught in class. In my spare time, I like to read books and watch science fiction movies.

When I get a job and I am able, I will definitely lend a hand and help those who are struggling like me. I am on my way to achieving my dream of becoming a Mechanical Engineer and there are many who play an important role in making this a reality. One of the most important ones is the FFE scholarship I have been awarded.

I am grateful to FFE and my donor for their contribution.”

FFE Alumnus

Ankita Sudhir Kumar Jha
Pune, Maharashtra

Alumnus Donor Ankita lives in Pune with her mother and brother. One of the first Student Coordinators of FFE’s student leadership program, Ankita studied Mechanical Engineering in MKSSS’s Cummins College of Engineering for Women, Pune and graduated in 2017. Honoring her pledge to FFE, Ankita contributes back to the Trust to support the education of other FFE scholars. This is Ankita’s story:

“I am Ankita, FFE Scholar from the 2013 batch. I am a mechanical engineer by profession and currently work with Cummins India in Pune. In my spare time, I love to cook and travel.

“I am what I am today, only because of my family and the Foundation For Excellence.”

It has been a long journey from being a scholar to an alumnus, but it was worth it. I come from a family which has always believed and taught me that knowledge is the most powerful weap-
Mr. Ghosh is a retired Associate Professor in Economics from Krishnath College, Berhampur, West Bengal. He has been associated with FFE India Trust as a Facilitator for over 4 years.

Mr. Ghosh was born and raised in Murshidabad, West Bengal. He completed higher secondary school in 1974 from Krishnath College School, Berhampur and went on to graduate in Economics (Hons.) from Krishnath College in 1977. In 1980, he earned a post graduate degree in Economics from Jadavpur University, Kolkata.

Under the Recommendation of College Service Commission (WB) in 1981, Mr. Ghosh joined Krishnath College as a Lecturer in Economics. During his years teaching at the college, he had various additional responsibilities including Exam-Coordinator, Secretary – Teachers’ Council and Hostel Superintendent. From 2014-15, he also served as the Principal-In-Charge of the college. After 35 years of uninterrupted association with the college, Mr. Ghosh retired from his academic career in May 2016. Mr. Ghosh tells us of his journey with FFE which began in spring 2014:

“It was perhaps one of those busy exam days in Krishnath College Berhampur. I received a phone call from an unknown person who requested to speak with me for a few minutes. The caller apprised me of his intention to enlist me as a Facilitator of FFE in West Bengal. The caller was none other than Mr. Sastri Sekhar, the then Operations Director of FFE India Trust. Initially I was hesitant as I was not fully aware of the Trust and its mission. But when my respected teacher and colleague Dr. Basudev Chatterjee, who happened to be an FFE facilitator, approached me and shared his experiences with the Trust, I had no hesitation to become a part of the FFE family.

Everything surrounding us – events, perspectives, contexts, our needs - have been changing rapidly. The core team of FFE, with striking precision, copes with these changes. Besides the scholarship programme, various other development programs (skill development and job readiness program, mentorship program, for instances) clearly help talented but economically hindered individuals bloom and add HUMAN CAPITAL to the national basket. Wishing the onward march of the Trust to continue to accom-

Volunteer Speak

Volunteer Facilitator

Kalyanaksha Ghosh
Berhampur, West Bengal
Employee Feature

Gangadharaiah K N
Office Assistant

Gangadhar joined FFE India Trust as part of the Administrative Team in December 2014.

In his role as Office Assistant, Gangadhar handles organizational and clerical support tasks. These include general maintenance, sorting and distributing communications, updating records, monitoring supply levels and event logistics, receptionist duties, catering to visitor/guest requirements at the office and being available to help with multiple tasks from varied teams.

Prior to joining FFE, Gangadhar worked as Office Assistant for two decades at Mahila Samakhya Karnataka, a project of Government of India focused on empowerment of women living in rural India through education. He completed 2nd year PUC (Class 12) from Siddalingeshwara Junior College – Yediyur, Tumkur.

In his spare time, Gangadhar likes to watch cricket matches on TV. He is fond of visiting temples and other historical sites in and around Karnataka. He lives in Bangalore with his wife and son who is currently studying in Class 12.