

Excellence is our sole aim, ranks will follow

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Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Indore, on its debut in World University Rankings 2019, has surpassed all IITs across the country. It has made it into top-400 educational institutes of the world and claimed second spot in the country. IIT-Indore director Pradeep Mathur talks about the achievement and other plans...

Q. IIT- Indore surpassed all other IITs. What do you think of this feat?

■ The rank is not unexpected. When we made our case for institute of eminence, we did a lot of analysis and realized that we were the top institution of the country. Till last to last year, we were not eligible as the strength (number of publications) was not large enough to qualify as it requires at least 1000 publications. We crossed the minimum criteria last year and qualified for the rankings. We were not surprised with the rank, but were surprised to find that we are the top IIT. We've overtaken IIT-Bombay, Madras, Delhi and all older IITs. There 49 Indian universities and institutes in the top-1000.

Q. What's been the strength and weakness of the institute?

■ Research, teaching, citations, international outlook and industry consultancy were the parameters for the ranking. Citation was our strongest

Q & A

point. We are in the top-200 in terms of citation. What all Indian institutes lack are international students. IITs have not really evolved the system yet, where large number of international students come to these institutes. This is something we really need to work on.

Q. What makes IIT-Indore different from other IITs?

■ We promote research culture of the highest order. About 80 per cent of our faculty members are foreign trained. Even the remaining 20 per cent are also from top institutes. And there is no pressure on them. We put a lot of emphasis not only on PhD research but on undergraduate and masters research as well. We don't have rigid boundaries between departments. We enjoy a lot of flexibility, which removes many hurdles of achieving top-grade research. Our standard of PhD is very high.

Q. What's the plan to attract international students?

■ Around 15-20 students come every year for two weeks to a couple of months. The number is on the rise. We are entering into agreements with foreign institutions, where we will be able to host foreign students for longer durations. This year, two inter-

national students enrolled for our Masters' degree. We have international ad-junk and visiting professors.

Q. Will this achievement help you in becoming an institute of eminence?

■ Our ambition is to be recognized as the institute of eminence by government of India. It is a scheme, where they've recognized 10 government institutes and 10 private ones with potential to break into top international ranking. This rank has come at a good time and it strengthens our case. Government has already recognized IIT-Bombay, IIT-Delhi and IIT-Madras. I hope we become one of the seven institutes. We've already given a presentation.

Q. Now, what's the target?

■ We're very confident that we will be in top-200. If not in next three years, we might be there in five. But, ranking is not something we're aiming for. For us quality of education is of utmost importance. Our aim is to encourage our faculty and students to excel. If that brings us high rank, so be it.

Pradeep Mathur
Director, IIT

