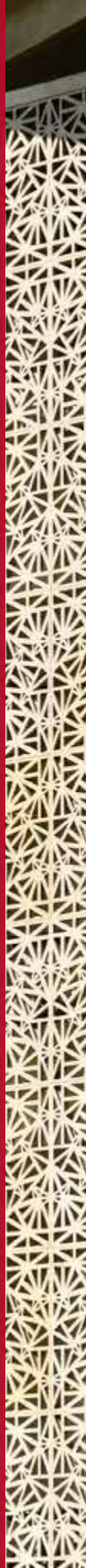




ASHOKA
UNIVERSITY

**ANNUAL
REPORT
2016-17**



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31 June 2017

Ashoka is currently poised to enter its fourth year. As most of you know, it is the fulfilment of a dream. It is the first university dedicated to the teaching of the Liberal Arts and the first educational institution built entirely through collective philanthropy. Although the University itself has physically existed only for three years, the dream behind it is a decade old.

One very good indicator of Ashoka's success is the interest and excitement it has generated amongst students. In the last year, we received 7,000 student applications for 450 seats from 34 countries.

Ashoka has attracted distinguished scholars as faculty from across disciplines and this year we had the privilege to have the co-operation of leading Indian scientists. They were part of an Advisory Committee, led by Professor Sabyasachi Bhattacharya, for a new science programme at Ashoka. The Committee is providing ideas on integrating the sciences with humanities and social sciences and creating among the students the intellectual training needed for original research. We are happy to announce that Physics and Biology will be offered as part of the undergraduate programme from the Academic Year beginning 2017.

In addition to building a rigorous academic programme, we continue to address subjects relevant to contemporary India through our Centres of Excellence. These include women's leadership, gender, entrepreneurship, social impact, and philanthropy. Our Centres are already making their mark by holding conferences, conducting research, and contributing to public discourse on topical issues.

Our student intake is a testament to our commitment to building an inclusive institution that fosters gender, socio-economic, and geographic diversity. Sixty per cent of students received need-based scholarships; 52 per cent of the student body is women; and 20 per cent comprises international students.

Our project cost is now Rs 750 crore, for which we have already raised commitments in excess of Rs 600 crore from across the world.

Ashoka has, in a short span of time, achieved significant milestones. Yet, in the words of Robert Frost, the poet, "we have miles to go before we sleep." That is if we can ever sleep! Building one of the finest universities in India will continue to be a work in progress.

We invite you to join us in building a legacy of pride for future generations of this country.

Andre Beteille
Chancellor

Rudrangshu Mukherjee
Vice-Chancellor

Year In Review



THE Young India Fellowship

THE YOUNG INDIA FELLOWSHIP (YIF) is Ashoka's flagship postgraduate programme. It is a one-year multidisciplinary course that seeks to create the next generation of leaders and change agents.

The YIF curriculum is a distillation of a broader Liberal Arts education. Students come from diverse academic backgrounds like business, law, social sciences, art, medicine and science. The YIF offers rigorous courses that develop critical thinking, leadership, and problem-solving skills over eight semesters of six weeks each.

The Fellowship commenced in 2011 and admitted its sixth cohort in July 2016. The fifth cohort comprising 194 students graduated in June 2016. Since its inception, 858 students have graduated from the programme.

In the 2016 admission year, the programme received 3,930 applications. Offers were made to 348 applicants and 212 Fellows were admitted. These individuals were selected through a rigorous admission process focused on academic and personal excellence.

Veteran journalist Palagummi Sainath with students at his guest lecture held in Dr. Reddy's Auditorium

“Prof. Mukherjee did not teach us history. He told us stories. Stories of men who’ve made India what it is today. He took these great men, the makers of modern India, off the high pedestals our high school history teachers had placed them on. He dusted off the layers of myth and tedium, polished them with a generous amount of character and handed us humans who’ve done both great good and otherwise.

Not one class did we listen to a lecture. Instead, we watched history play out in front of our eyes.”

Nandita Ramanathan, YIF 2015 on Prof. Rudrangshu Mukherjee

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

In 2016-17 the Young India Fellowship continued to grow and welcomed graduates from diverse disciplines and institutions (including four foreign students). A total of 212 students were admitted compared to 194 in the previous year. YIF remained revenue positive for three years in a row. All admitted Fellows received some form of scholarship, ranging from a full scholarship to various lower levels of support. This included a tuition waiver starting from 25 per cent and rising to 100 per cent of tuition and housing.

FACULTY

YIF is delivered by the leading academics and practitioners from India and abroad.

In 2016-17, 27 professors (18 Indian and 9 international) taught on a diverse range of subjects. Some instructors that taught this academic year are AK Shiva Kumar (Economist & Professor, Harvard University), Geetanjali Chanda (Senior Lecturer, Yale University), Kenwyn Smith (Professor, UPenn), and Mihir Shah (Economist and former member, Planning Commission).

Guest lectures by academics and global achievers complement the academic courses. Since the launch of the programme, more than 350 individuals have addressed the Young India Fellows. Prominent speakers include Jairam Ramesh (Member of Parliament, Rajya Sabha), Madeleine Albright (Former US Secretary of State), Pramod Bhasin (Founder, Genpact), Ramachandra Guha (Historian and Biographer), Shaheen Mistri (Founder, Akanksha Foundation, and CEO, Teach for India), Shashi Tharoor (Member of Parliament, Lok Sabha) and Sheldon Pollock (Professor, Columbia University).

ADMISSIONS AND OUTREACH

With a strong academic base and rigorous 5-stage admissions process, the 2016-17 cycle focused on developing better processes. The Admissions and Outreach team increased engagement, holding 265 information seminars with the support of 165 campus leaders in 107 institutes and 17 organisations. Students, both current Fellows and alumni, also contributed by conducting presentations and interviews. Newsletters, website and social media enhancements, amongst other outreach activities were instrumental in increasing engagement.

Eighty-nine per cent of those admitted had a bachelor’s degree while 11 per cent had earned postgraduate degrees as well. The majority, 42 per cent had Engineering degrees. Humanities, Business and Accounting, and Sciences made up the rest. Sixty Six per cent of those admitted were women. Fellows hailed from 22 states, with the highest percentage (17 per cent) hailing from the Delhi NCR, followed by Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, and Uttar Pradesh at 10 per cent each.

ACADEMICS

During the Academic Year 2016-17, 27 courses were taught over 8 terms of 6 weeks each. Subject areas covered included leadership, psychology, history, literature, sociology, law, politics, art, communication, science and mathematics. Topical coursework stressed multidisciplinary approaches to knowledge.

The academics team made significant progress in implementing the Fellowship’s Student Information System (SIS). Engagement with Fellows outside of

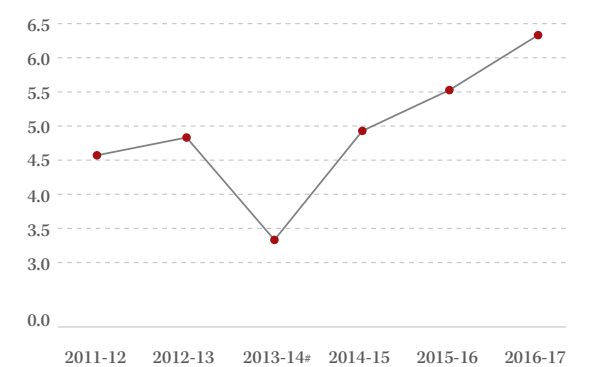
the classroom grew in the form of events such as performances, guest lectures, events, and town halls.

The Critical Writing programme was widely appreciated by Fellows as an essential skill development unit of the programme. The course operates by dividing the cohort into smaller groups of 15 fellows each. These groups are then allocated to a Writing Preceptor, who works closely with their groups over the academic year. A full-time Assistant Director for YIF writing course has been appointed for the 2017-18 session

FINANCIAL AID

YIF is a fellowship programme and every Fellow is awarded a minimum amount of scholarship. Ashoka operates on a principle of admission wherein students are offered financial aid depending on the economic need and profile of their family. In this context, the YIF class of 2016-17 was provided scholarships of Rs 6.5 crore with more than 11 per cent of the student body receiving 100 per cent aid.

YIF SCHOLARSHIPS OVER THE YEARS



*In 2013-14, the structure of the YIF scholarships was revised

PROFESSIONAL AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

YIF requires Fellows to undertake an eight month-long engagement with an organisation after completing the first two terms of the programme. These projects are derived from different companies, organisations, and institutions across various sectors. This component of the programme is known as the Experiential Learning Module (ELM). Fellows selected 66 ELMs from a set of 154 projects presented to them. There were also 5 self-designed ELMs, making up a total of 71 projects. ELM clients represented education, development, start-up, research, government and polity, agriculture, heritage and the arts, business development, corporate, and other sectors. The professional development team revamped the ELM process to ensure a three-stage, year-round engagement, including feedback and evaluation involving all stakeholders.

Fellows benefited from access to a pool of over 200 mentors identified by the programme team. They reported an overall positive experience. Systems were installed for better articulation of expectations for both mentors and mentees, along with relationship management.

Career development continued to be strong with 98 per cent of Fellows being placed by the end of the year and the maximum compensation package being Rs 19.5 lakh per annum. Forty seven per cent entered the social sector.

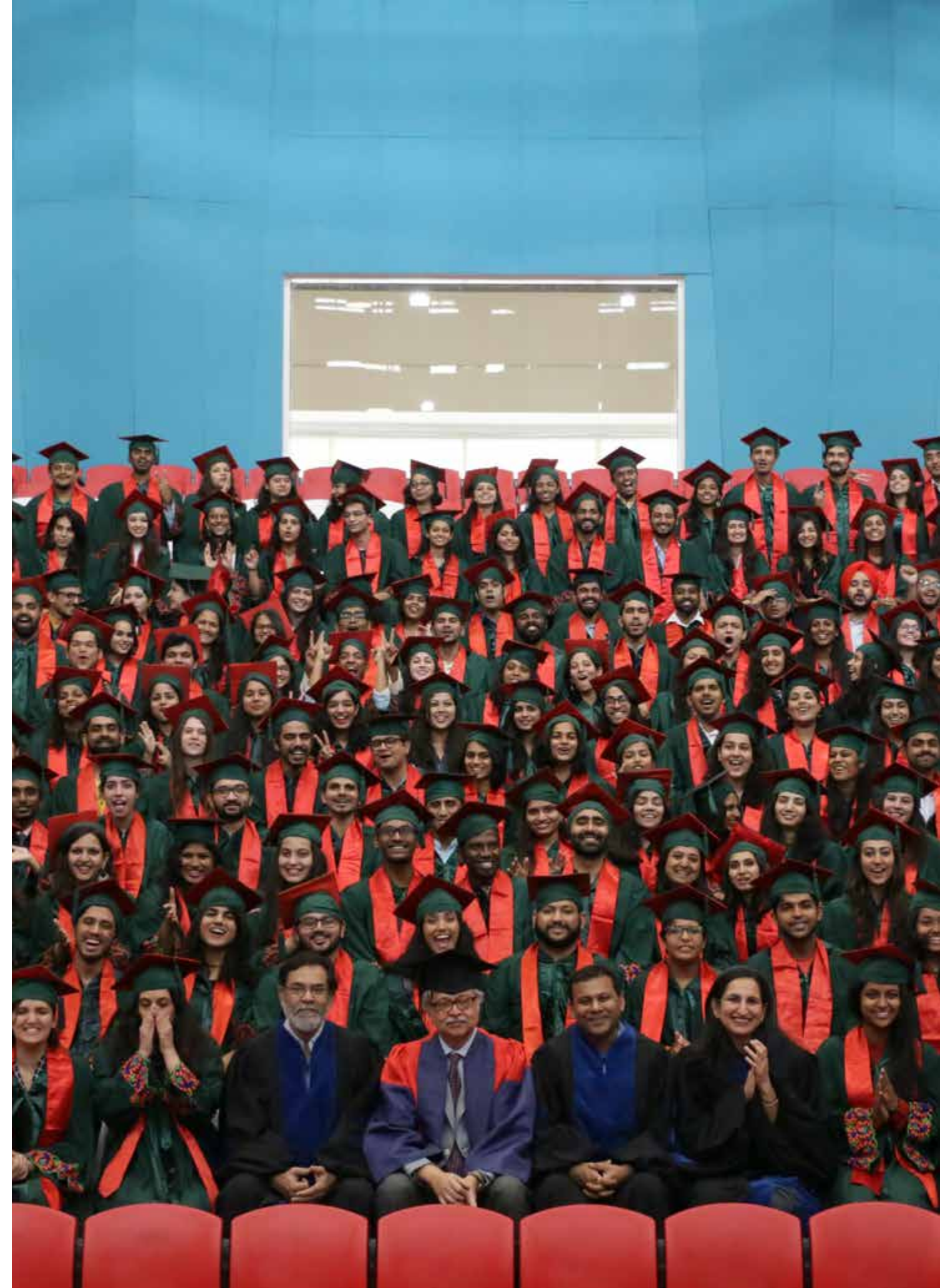
YIF CONVOCATION 2017

Ashoka University hosted the convocation ceremony for the YIF Class of 2017 on 24 June 2017. The sixth cohort of 212 Fellows received their certificates from the Guest of Honour, Magasay Award winner Aruna Roy. Founders, faculty, friends and families of the graduating students were also present along with other members of the Ashoka family.

Shashank Sharma and Ragavijaya G were awarded the Torchbearer Award for embodying the spirit and ideals of the programme and displaying all-round excellence. Shweta Chopra received the YIF Valedictorian Award for leading the batch in academic excellence. The Spirit of YIF Award was awarded to three students from the cohort, Nayanika Chatterjee, Sajal Sehgal, and Manish Reddy Guduru.

THE ROAD AHEAD

Ashoka is considering increasing the class size of the YIF to 300 in the academic year 2017-18. This will necessitate adapting the programme to ensure that the Fellows continue to receive the same quality of experience as the earlier cohorts.



The YIF Class of 2017 with (front row, left to right) Deputy Dean Anunaya Chaubey, Vice-Chancellor Rudrangshu Mukherjee, Pro Vice-Chancellor Vineet Gupta and Assistant Dean Aniha Brar



THE Undergraduate Programme

THE UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMME

exposes students to a wide range of disciplines in the humanities, social sciences and the arts. Ashoka is India's first university offering a multidisciplinary, integrated Liberal Arts and Sciences programme. The University's undergraduate (UG) programme was introduced in August 2014.

A distinctive feature of the programme is the Foundation courses that precede the selection of Majors and Minors. These range from Great Books, Mind and Behaviour to English, Economics, Film and Art.

In the Academic Year starting August 2017, Ashoka will also launch its sciences programme with Physics and Biology. The curriculum will be innovative, interdisciplinary, and will engage with the humanities and social sciences.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

2016-17 was an important year in Ashoka's history. It witnessed the graduation of its founding undergraduate class with 118 students. In the same year, the University welcomed the Class of 2019 consisting of 345 UG students. The students admitted this year came from 68 cities from 24 states in India and from five countries. Fifty-seven per cent of them are women. Fifty per cent of the batch was on some form of scholarship.

Ashoka had several renowned scholars join this year to bolster its already reputed faculty base. The year also witnessed immense progress in establishing the sciences programme to be launched in the next Academic Year.

FACULTY

PhDs from all over the world teach at Ashoka. The university has over 80 faculty members – 53 full-time and 24 visiting, in addition to those teaching co-curricular courses. In the last recruitment cycle, Ashoka received five hundred and ninety applications were received for 12 faculty positions.

A major focus for this Academic Year was the recruitment of faculty for Ashoka's sciences programme to be launched in 2017. Prof. Sabyasachi Bhattacharya (former Director, TIFR Mumbai; Physics) led the hiring process. The University appointed a number of eminent scientists and instituted a Science Advisory Committee to advise on faculty recruitment as well as develop the curriculum and resources. The new recruitments for the science programme during this Academic Year include Bikram Phookun (PhD University of Maryland; Physics) and Imroze Khan (PhD IISER Kolkata; Biology). LS Shashidhara (PhD Cambridge University; Biology) was appointed as a Distinguished Visiting Professor.

ADMISSIONS AND OUTREACH

Admissions are based on academic performance, extracurricular achievements, and personal attributes. Students have chosen Ashoka over offers from institutions such as Yale-NUS, Carnegie Mellon, Duke, and St. Stephen's.

For the Class of 2019, outreach efforts involved visiting 350 schools and meeting over 30,000 students. As a result, Ashoka received 2,643 applications from 34 countries and admitted 345 students.

The UG Outreach team engaged in a diverse range of activities this year, including multiple new initiatives. With a team of nine managers, Ashoka University covered six territories – Delhi, NCR, North, East, West, South. Resources were also dedicated to international outreach with an emphasis on the SAARC region, Asia Pacific, and Africa. Overall, more than 350 school engagements were conducted by means of school presentations, international and national seminars, faculty workshops and career fairs. After rigorous promotion of the newly introduced sciences programme, 288 applicants indicated Physics or Biology as their preferred major.

Ashoka hosted several conferences this year – national and international. The Annual School Leaders' Summit held in February 2017 was attended by 62 delegates from top schools across India. The International Educators Conference held in March 2017 hosted delegates from more than 17 countries.

In all interactions with students and stakeholders, the focus continues to be on inclusivity and diversity. These key motivators define the University's outreach strategy in making Ashoka an institution that supports every deserving student acquire a quality undergraduate education.



VINAY SITAPATI
Assistant Professor, Political Science

FACULTY IN FOCUS

As Assistant Professor of Political Science, 30-year-old Vinay is a new member of Ashoka's list of esteemed faculty. A graduate of the National Law School, Bangalore and Harvard University, he recently earned his doctorate in politics from Princeton University. His bestselling book, *Half Lion: How PV Narasimha Rao Transformed India*, was listed in *The Economist's 'Books of the Year'* (2016) and is in its third reprint.

Vinay has written for publications as diverse as the *Economic & Political Weekly*, *International New York Times*, *The Indian Express*, *Harvard BlackLetter Law Journal*, *The Hindu*, *Harvard Crimson*, *Oxford Handbook of the Indian Constitution*, and *Seminar*.

ACADEMICS

The University currently offers Majors in nine subjects and interdisciplinary Majors in eight subjects. In 2016-2017, students had a pool of 17 Majors to choose from. This includes nine conventional and eight interdisciplinary Majors. They could also choose from 15 Minors.

To graduate with a bachelor's degree from Ashoka University, students must pass courses that are broadly divided into three categories – Foundation Courses, Major Courses (including Interdisciplinary Majors) and Co-Curricular Courses.

In the current Academic Year, Economics and Psychology are top Major choices; International Relations and Media Studies are top Minor choices. Academic performance for undergraduate students has continued to rise for the third consecutive year. Student performance has been fairly consistent and women continue to be better represented in the top performance band.



With the help of extensive outreach efforts, students come from places near and far such as Nepal, Dubai, Nigeria, and California. Pictured here, a student at an outreach presentation in Ethiopia

FINANCIAL AID

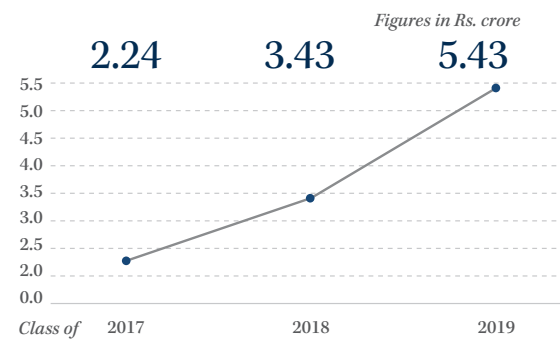
In 2016, 51 per cent of UG students were on varying degrees of financial aid. At Ashoka, admissions are merit-based while scholarships are need-based. Fifty per cent of the total undergraduate student body has received scholarships.

A total amount of Rs 5.43 crore was awarded in the form of scholarships to undergraduate students during the Academic Year 2016-17.

PROFESSIONAL AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

The Career Development Office (CDO) worked extensively to create a number of internship opportunities for undergraduate students. A total of 161 students pursued internships. 94 students worked with organisations in the social sector, 41 in the corporate sector; and 26 at Ashoka University.

UG SCHOLARSHIPS OVER THE YEARS



The organisations include Indian Economist, Naukri.com, Deloitte, Give India, Teach for India, Oxford University Press, and The Caravan.

Eighty-five per cent of the Class of 2017 opted to stay back for the Ashoka Scholars Programme (ASP) [further information on page 18]. Placement for the remaining students was carried out successfully.

Students showed a significant interest in consulting roles and McKinsey and Better Mortgage joined as recruiters. 2 students were offered Graduate Management Associate roles at Citibank. Other recruiters include Genpact, Nearbuy from Groupon, MC Saatchi, Centre for Civil Society, The Wire, Vision India Foundation and Teach for India

UG CONVOCATION 2017

Ashoka's first undergraduate class graduated on 20 May 2017. The cohort of 118 students received certificates from the Guest of Honor, Nobel Laureate Venkatraman Ramakrishnan in the presence of Vice-Chancellor, Rudrangshu Mukherjee and Pro-Vice Chancellor, Vineet Gupta. Founders, faculty, friends and family were also present.

Eminent speakers at the ceremony included Sunil Khilnani, Director, India Institute, King's College and Academic Council Member, Ashoka University; and Sunita Narain, Director General, Centre for Science and Environment.

The Ashoka Ethos Award, bestowed on two graduating seniors who best exemplify the University's ideals, was awarded to Manisha Koppala and Sankalp Garud.

THE ROAD AHEAD

In the pursuit of quality, Ashoka admitted smaller batch sizes in its initial years. However, as the University increasingly gains recognition, it receives an increased number of quality applications. An additional 100 students will be added to each incoming class.

The students from the graduating cohort who chose to stay on for the fourth year will constitute the first ASP cohort.



RIGHT: While many from the founding batch will return to Ashoka to form the first ASP cohort, several will move abroad to pursue degrees in universities such as Brown University, University of Minnesota and SOAS

THE Music of Ideas: Why Liberal Arts?

ALI KHAN MAHMUDABAD



Ali Khan received his PhD from the University of Cambridge. He is a frequent contributor to both English and Urdu language news and opinion publications.

No one in my Social and Political Formations class had heard of the “millennial whoop.” They were even more perplexed when I played some music videos to illustrate this snippet of sound, which alternates between the fifth and third notes of a major scale. The millennial whoop manifests itself in various ways in modern pop music. Calling it the millennial whoop wrongly implies that this musical pattern is somehow entirely new. It also existed in European classical music. Once you have heard the millennial whoop, you will immediately recognise it, in Beethoven’s Für Elise, for instance.

Although, superficially, the millennial whoop is different in each musical rendition, the embedded pattern of musical notes is immediately familiar to the listener. This familiarity is often subconscious and obviously most people tend not to think about why they like a particular piece of music or song. At this point, I am sure you are wondering what pop music has to do with politics, philosophy or history. Just like music, political thought is also inextricably grounded in the past, but often in ways that are not immediately obvious. These links to the past are sometimes marked by ruptures, sometimes by continuities and at other times by an amalgam of reconfigurations that are born out of a particular context and a specific historical juncture. The past, then, is embedded in the present, often in an obvious way and sometimes in hidden and subtle intangible ways.

Today, despite globalisation, music from one part of the world is often ‘noise’ to people from other cultures. This metaphor extends to the manner in which we view economic, religious, and sociopolitical issues. The unfamiliar political ideology of others is often dismissed as incoherent or insubstantial

because it is unfamiliar to our minds and we simply do not have the ‘ear’ to understand it. Human beings tend to flock to the familiar. Whether it is in our daily lives or our perception of the world around us, instinctively, we try to find patterns and imbue these with meaning. The danger is when we think that these patterns are absolute. This inevitably leads to the privileging of a certain set of ideas, and even thinkers, as somehow representing the only way in which we can organise our societies, build our cities, derive our laws and create a vibrant civilisation.

It is precisely these kinds of assumptions that the liberal arts seek to undo in their goal to make the unfamiliar familiar. An education in liberal arts is not merely about acquiring knowledge. It helps create tools to understand our world by breaking down disciplinary boundaries, building bridges and finding patterns, rather than just highlighting the differences.

In my Social and Political Foundation course, this semester, we celebrated Confucius’ 2,567th birthday by listening to a clip of the Song of Peace. While teaching this course on non-Western political philosophy, my students often wonder why we are studying selections from the Analects of Confucius, chapters of the Gita and the Quran, or Hausa and Yoruba stories from Nigeria. Beyond the fact that the ideas, which emanate from these books, are embedded in the present, the questions that animate these thinkers are often the broader questions that people have asked since the first written records. To return to our musical metaphor, we listen to unfamiliar music and try and understand how the chords, harmonies and melodies composed thousands of years ago remain deeply relevant today.

Office of Undergraduate Programmes (OUP)

The OUP was established with the objective of providing a full range of resources to support students from the time of their admission till graduation. OUP is committed to ensuring that UG students have a fulfilling, vibrant campus life which includes wellness and co-curricular activities.

The OUP works with students, faculty, and staff to ensure the integrity and quality of the undergraduate curriculum. As such one of the important responsibilities of this office is the development and promulgation of academic policies and programmes and to publish, administer and interpret them.

Office of Academic Affairs (OAA)

The OAA administers the full spectrum of Ashoka University's undergraduate academic experience, including course scheduling, course registration, academic advising, Major and Minor declaration, course evaluation, and student disciplinary action. Faculty assessments and student evaluations are led by the OAA.

The Office also liaises with the Office of Student Life (OSL) in ensuring continuity between academics and extra-curricular programmes.



KUNWAR ARORA
Undergraduate, 2020

SCHOLAR IN FOCUS

Born in rural Punjab, Kunwar's parents could not understand why a 5-year-old who was performing well in academics could not grasp spoken words. He was eventually diagnosed with full hearing loss resulting from a reaction to antibiotics. After shifting to a big city, Kunwar attended regular school and learned to lip-read, which allows him to follow lectures.

After enrolling at Ashoka, Kunwar developed a keen interest in film-making, photography, and modelling. An excellent student, he works with the Office of Learning Support and the Centre for Writing and Communication to further improve his academic record. After graduating, Kunwar 'hopes to join the civil services and contribute to society, rather than depend on it.'

Young Scholars Programme (YSP)

The YSP is a unique summer residential programme that introduces outstanding high school students to the idea of a liberal arts education. It is a certified, week-long, residential course in which students are exposed to different disciplines through experiential learning. The programme covers a range of activities such as lectures, workshops, discussion groups, project-work, presentations, and performances. This is done in an effort to introduce the young student to the academic and cultural life at Ashoka University.

Young scholars attended several workshops and performances led by student-run clubs and societies. Pictured here, a workshop held by Abhinaya, the dance society.



The second edition of the YSP took place from 24 May to 31 May 2017. It received exceptional responses from high school students across the country. A total of 124 students from 83 schools across 36 cities attended the programme.

Classes were taught by eminent Ashoka faculty including Prof. Rudrangshu Mukherjee, Prof. Gopalkrishna Gandhi, Prof. Madhavi Maganti, and Prof. Justin McCarthy.

Ashoka Scholars Programme (ASP)

After completing their undergraduate studies, students can choose to stay at Ashoka for a fourth year for further research and study. This is known as the Ashoka Scholars Programme (ASP). The ASP earns Scholars a Postgraduate Diploma in Advanced Studies and Research (DipASR).

All UG students graduating with bachelor's degrees at the end of their third year, or who have completed at least 92 credits of their degree programme, are eligible for admission.

Students formally applied to the programme at the end of the monsoon semester. 110 students from the graduating batch chose to enrol. Once enrolled, Scholars had a pool of several tracks to choose from. They can use their fourth year to complete a Minor, turn a Minor into a second Major, choose a specialisation or prepare for an MA degree.

"The children are still raving about their experience in Ashoka. They were very much taken by the impressive campus and the depth and breadth of the instructions provided in the summer program. This experience has already made them somewhat the expert on all global issues."

*Ezra Nigussie
Principal of school in Ethiopia*



Masters and Phd Programmes

Besides the Young India Fellowship, the University's flagship programme, Ashoka offers a Masters in Liberal Studies (MLS). The University is working towards instituting other postgraduate courses which will commence in the next Academic Year.

MA IN LIBERAL STUDIES

In the monsoon semester 2015, Ashoka launched its MLS programme – its first postgraduate degree programme. Admission is open to students who have graduated from the YIF programme and have been accepted by a faculty mentor to work on a specific research project as a Graduate Assistant.

There was increased interest from YIF students in the programme in the Academic Year 2016-17, and a higher number of applicants (23). Ten students were admitted into the programme for 2016-17 to study a variety of subjects ranging from English, history, philosophy to psychology and computer science.

MA IN ECONOMICS

The MA (Economics) programme has been developed to provide students with an opportunity to be trained in advanced, modern economics by highly qualified faculty. The academic approach is based on bringing together cutting-edge economic theory and rigorous data analysis to address questions at the frontiers of research. An entrance test was conducted

in Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, and Kolkata in May 2017. A total of 175 students appeared for the test and 68 offers were made for the first cohort.

PhD PROGRAMME

The PhD programme aims to cover all disciplines in the humanities, social sciences, mathematical sciences and physical sciences. In the year 2016-2017, Ashoka University opened up applications for PhD programmes in Biology, Economics, English and Computer Science.

Centres of Excellence

To supplement its academic programmes, Ashoka has created several Centres of Excellence that foster thought leadership, generate knowledge, and aim to create new avenues of research in areas of national and social relevance.

CENTRE FOR WRITING AND COMMUNICATION (CWC)

Although writing centres are well established in international Liberal Arts colleges, they are rare in India. By integrating the CWC into the core of its academic programme, Ashoka distinguishes itself from its institutional peers the country. CWC's programmes include one-on-one tutorials, group sessions on specific aspects of writing, and workshops designed in consultation with faculty.

The CWC provides students support during all stages of writing, from pre-writing and thesis development to structuring an argument and revising drafts. The Centre is led by Prof. Jitender Gill, Senior Advisor.

CENTRE FOR ENTREPRENEURSHIP (CfE)

CfE was founded to create a powerful entrepreneurial ecosystem in the country. One of the main objectives of the Centre is to create and support budding entrepreneurs at Ashoka through teaching, skill-building, events, networking, and mentorship. To this effect, CfE launched its flagship programme, Entrepreneur in Residence, to create a support platform for aspiring entrepreneurs to nurture and grow their business ideas. The Centre's programming efforts are led by its Director, Priyank Narayan.

GENPACT CENTRE FOR WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP (GCWL)

The GCWL is primarily an industry-academia partnership that adopts a multidisciplinary approach to study and address issues of women empowerment, create a networking platform for stakeholders, and also develop and enhance leadership skills. In March 2016, GCWL celebrated its one-year anniversary with a marquee conference on women's leadership. GCWL is led by its Director, Dr Meena Wilson.

TRIVEDI CENTRE FOR POLITICAL DATA (TCPD)

TCPD aims at promoting data-driven research, policy work and journalism by providing open access to scientifically collected data and by offering data services to non-profit organizations. Within a short span of time, its research has made significant contributions to leading newspapers, magazines, books and journals. Prof. Gilles Verniers (Political Science) and Prof. Sudheendra Hangal (Computer Science) head the TCPD.

"One of the most exciting reasons for me to support Ashoka is that it is an incubator of women's leadership within a co-ed environment—the first of its kind in India!"

*Harshbeena Sahney Zaveri
Founder, Ashoka University &
Managing Director and President,
NRB Bearings Ltd.*



Dean Vanita Shastri speaks to Fellows and UG students at the AIM Smart City Accelerator workshop conducted by the Centre for Entrepreneurship

CENTRE FOR STUDIES IN GENDER AND SEXUALITY (CSGS)

CSGS was established with the aim of studying the broader spectrum of questions relating to both gender and sexuality. The Centre focuses on three areas of activity: scholarly research, social outreach, and media consultation. It aims to conduct workshops on gender sensitivity that can be presented at schools, organisations, and colleges. CSGS is led by Prof. Madhavi Menon (English).

CENTRE FOR SOCIAL IMPACT AND PHILANTHROPY (CSIP)

CSIP addresses two major needs for social impact in India today. The first is to influence philanthropic capital in order to be more strategic and informed; the second is to ensure that the capital can be effectively absorbed. CSIP's flagship programme, Mother Teresa Fellowship, has supported 40 emerging social-sector leaders who are committed to serving underprivileged communities and creating meaningful impact in society. The Centre is led by its Director, Ingrid Srinath.

"Ever since I can remember, my mother has been rolling beedis (local Indian cigarettes) to sustain our family. She used to tell me that the education was the only thing I should believe in and that I should never have to roll beedis in my life.

YIF helped me discover the joys of shared learning with a diverse group of people and a spirit of togetherness."

Ashweetha Shetty, YIF 2013

Inclusion, Diversity & Social Impact

Ashoka is committed to making an international quality education accessible to deserving students, irrespective of their social and economic backgrounds. The University admits, supports, and nurtures students from diverse socio-economic backgrounds, genders, regions, cultures, and ideologies. What makes Ashoka unique in the Indian higher education space is that it provides the highest amount of need-based scholarships. In 2016, the University awarded scholarships of Rs 11.9 crore. Of this, Rs 5.4 crore was given to undergraduate students and Rs 6.5 crore to Fellows.





International Partnerships

Academic programmes at Ashoka are delivered in collaboration with world-class institutions. The University of Pennsylvania, University of Michigan, Carleton College, King's College London, Sciences Po, Trinity College Dublin, UC Berkeley, Wellesley College and Yale University have all signed on to provide assistance in developing our unique curriculum and establishing the necessary academic departments. Other institutions include Centre for South Asia, Stanford University, Duke University, Lehigh University, University of Sheffield, HEC Paris, Tel Aviv University, and Victoria University of Wellington.

Yale University President Peter Salovey (front, left) at the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with Ashoka University's Vice-Chancellor Rudrangshu Mukherjee (front right) in the presence of senior leadership from both universities

Gender Inclusion

Ashoka fosters a gender-sensitive environment where students actively engage on issues of equity, inclusion, and diversity. Our student body comprises 55 per cent women at the undergraduate level and 64 per cent women at the postgraduate level.

In addition, Ashoka has launched a range of initiatives to address gender inclusion and women's empowerment. Two such platforms include the Genpact Centre for Women's Leadership and the Centre for Studies in Gender and Sexuality.

Socio-Economic Diversity

Ashoka admits students based on merit but awards scholarships purely on the basis of financial need. Approximately 55 per cent of the undergraduate class has received scholarships. At the postgraduate level, 100 per cent of Young India Fellows are supported by full or partial scholarships.

High-need students are provided exceptional scholarships which cover their day-to-day expenses including books, stationery, and food. The admissions team works closely with students to understand their family's individual circumstances and creates a unique financial aid package to support them. As a result, students from varied economic backgrounds have the opportunity to study at Ashoka.

National Diversity

Ashoka's students come from 26 states and over 60 different towns and cities from remote corners of India. Some of the tier II and III cities represented in our student body are Alappuzha, Gwalior, Panipat, Jaipur, Bhilwara, Jamshedpur, Srinagar, Darjeeling, Vellore, Thanjavur, and Vadodara.

Exposure to varied backgrounds enables students to challenge their assumptions and broaden their understanding of India and the world.

Social Impact

Ashoka is committed to imparting an education that engenders a spirit of empathy, social consciousness, and public service. A significant number of our alumni are pursuing meaningful careers in the social and development sectors. Close to 25 per cent of Fellows are placed in nonprofits of national and international repute such as The World Bank, United Nations, Teach for India, Prime Minister's Rural Development Fund, World Wildlife Fund, Samaj Pragati Sahyog (SPS) and Pratham.



Student Life

In 2016-17, Ashoka continued to foster its active student life through events, lectures, workshops, and field visits. These events revolved around the themes of leadership, diversity and inclusion, social impact, and personal and professional development.

Students have access to a wide variety of co-curricular activities that are enjoyable and intellectually engaging. They are encouraged to form clubs and societies to pursue social, cultural, intellectual, and professional interests. At present, there are 31 clubs. They cover a wide range of activities from music, dance, theater, debating, poetry, and comedy to baking, rotary, art appreciation, and gaming.

The Office of Undergraduate Programmes and the Office of Student Life support these clubs through infrastructure, grants, and mentorship.



TOP: Ultimate Frisbee is a popular sport at Ashoka.

The campus plays host to several intra-college and inter-college events throughout the year

BOTTOM: (from left to right):

1. Renowned Odissi dancer Madhavi Mudgal performs in Dr Reddy's Auditorium with a student.

2. ASP Scholars catch-up over an evening snack outside the cafeteria.

3. Students hit the gym at the end of a long day of classes. The accessible nature of the gym for students of varying athletic abilities makes it a popular post-class destination.



The Chief Minister's Good Governance Associates

Launched in July 2016, the Chief Minister's Good Governance Associates (CMGGA) is an initiative of the Government of Haryana for young, promising leaders keen on working with state agencies. The programme aims to promote an understanding of the legislative processes and principles of good governance in the state. Ashoka is a knowledge partner for the CMGGA and facilitates the process of selection, recruitment, training and mentoring of the young leaders. Associates convene at the University every 7 weeks for training and alignment.

The present cohort comprises of 24 individuals who are recruited and posted in the 21 districts of Haryana for 12 months. They were chosen from a pool of 1,933 applicants.

Over the past year Associates have worked on 15 work modules – studying departmental problems and implementing state-wide solutions. A group of Associates designed and implemented common standard operating procedures for single fees and single-window payment across all districts. Another group working on the state grievance portal achieved a 75 per cent decrease in unsatisfactory redressal and speedier resolutions.

These young leaders are paired with top civil servants in the government to understand key issues and challenges that the state faces, largely concerning people, processes, and policy. Regular workshops with the Chief Minister and Chief Minister's Office and various departments are conducted to drive impact based on the Associates' work.

Ashoka Alumni Association

The Ashoka Alumni Association (AAA) was set up a little over a year after the University campus was inaugurated in 2014 when the community had under 450 alumni. Since then, the community has doubled in strength and strives to serve its role in helping fulfill Ashoka's endeavors. In 2016, alumni have contributed in several capacities: Creating the first AAA scholarship (over 100 gifts have been made through the first Annual Gift Campaign in the last quarter); mentorship (over 300 alumni have mentored one or more students); recruiting student talent (roughly 1 in 5 jobs and 3 in 5 ELMs are through alumni); and most notably, by uniting to provide financial support for personal emergencies. The AAA also launched a web portal and mobile app where one can create and register for events, network and access academic records.



KSHITI GALA
Young India Fellow, 2012

ALUMNUS IN FOCUS

Kshiti chose an unconventional path after the Fellowship and moved to the hinterlands of Madhya Pradesh for a year to work with Samaj Pragati Sahayog (SPS), one of India's largest initiatives for water and livelihood security. After a transformational year at SPS, Kshiti moved to Maharashtra to work for the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) project on Mainstreaming Coastal and Marine Biodiversity Conservation into Production Sectors in the Sindhudurg Coast.

In 2015, she received the Chevening scholarship to study at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. She is currently pursuing M.Sc in Development Economics.



Alumni at the photo booth during the annual Friends of YIF dinner, 2016

THE Anatomy of Thoughtful Space

SUPARNA BHALLA



Suparna Bhalla is the Principal Architect at Abaxial Architects PL. She is co-founder of the Future Institute, an urban research forum, and writes for several design journals in India and abroad.

Ashoka is more than a Liberal Arts University. It bears the mantle of being the first of its kind in India; a fusion of worlds reflected in the architecture of the campus, reinforced by the range of materials, textures and experiences.

Ashoka's architecture goes beyond the ornamental, emphasising functionality and catering to the needs and aspirations of the students. Traditional materials and craftsmanship frame spaces that stimulate innovative thinking.

The use of red baked bricks for the campus façade serves as an update of this somewhat neglected traditional material. The sandstone jaali screens, an integral part of India's craft legacy, shade the building and ventilate the corridors around the courtyard, breezeways in the open colonnades around the classrooms create comfortable lounge spaces between buildings.

The brick tile protrudes, the windows recess, the glazing is fritted, the stone is honed and the concrete is brushed. Each feature of the architecture is tactile, aiding the differently abled. Ramps, wide corridors, double railings and signage in Braille enable a variety of access. The focus on sustainable design is evident in the use of recycled building material, a composting system for organic waste, low energy fans in hostel rooms and aerated plumbing fixtures for reduced water consumption.

Transparency is another key design objective. The central courtyard is designed to ensure all entities (faculty, administration and students) are visible to each other, reinforcing the feeling of a cohesive whole.

Ashoka believes that space is the foundation of a Liberal Arts education, to catalyse cross-pollination of ideas and varying points of view. Each space here is, thus, marked by a sense of fluidity, designed for multiple uses and interactions. Lounges and libraries interchange roles; the landscape and terraces often become classrooms.

Space moves effortlessly, using scale, signs, patterns and foliage to craft an inclusive and diverse environment. The signage across the campus uses motifs borrowed from traditional Indian crafts of Gond, Madhubani and Warli. Magnificent trees such as the kikar, kadamb and neem, testify to the rich biodiversity of the region.

Space here seeks to both create and blur the boundaries between the inside and the outside, between the sensory and the tangible. The physical space takes on the mutable nature of the abstract world of ideas and learning.

Each building in Ashoka is, thus, more than just a physical space; it is a perspective vital to the idea of constant learning.

Campus

Ashoka aims to provide a 21st-century learning environment that fosters creative interactions among students, faculty, and guests. The campus infrastructure embodies the values, ethos, and aspirations of the University. The architects are Perkins-Eastman, an American firm that specialises in university campus design. They have designed for Columbia University, University of Pittsburgh, New York University and Indian School of Business (Mohali).

Creating a safe and tolerant campus for its students continued to be one of the University's main priorities this Academic Year. The shuttle service was provided with security personnel in its commute to the nearest metro station. It was ensured that all personnel on campus (irrespective of student, faculty, staff, or outsourced manpower) were provided smart-cards to monitor entry and exit in the campus.

The main projects for this Academic Year were the construction of the Academic Building 3 (Science) and Student Residence 4. Both buildings were successfully handed over.

The projects for 2017-18 are already in place. Construction of another faculty residence will start at the beginning of the next Academic Year. Construction of Student Residence 5 and a new library has commenced. These will be ready by June 2019.



25
ACRES



FULLY
RESIDENTIAL

1,360
STUDENTS

20
FACULTY &
ADMINISTRATORS
LIVING ON CAMPUS



ACCESSIBLE

People



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