

School of Design Thinking and Intellect's '1st National Conclave on Design Thinking for Academic Leaders' Propels 'Talent 2040' Agenda

- AICTE Chairman Prof. (Dr.) T G Sitharam delivered a Keynote address at the First National Conclave on Design Thinking, and the event brought over 250 Academic representatives of Management, Engineering, Technology, Arts, Sciences, Architecture, and Humanities under one roof
- Launched the Academia NxT – the Definitive Partner Program for Academic Institutions to comprehensively leverage Design Thinking by first focusing on Mindset Transformation
- Announced the first 'Design Thinking Impact Awards' to recognise some of the Adopters of Design Thinking in the Academic and Startup Fraternity
- The forum advances the key theme 'Talent 2040' by emphasising curating contextual curriculum to make students' future leaders

Chennai, India, March 27, 2024: In today's ever-changing landscape, every sector is experiencing dynamic shifts, and academia is no exception. Design Thinking, an innovative problem-solving approach, has emerged as a potent tool for unlocking new opportunities for innovation by focusing on customer needs and preferences. By adopting the first principles of Design Thinking, the academic sector is shifting from traditional teaching methods to a more learner-centric approach emphasising learning enhancement. This approach involves curating a contextual and composable curriculum tailored to the learners' needs and aspirations, preparing them to become future leaders.

To reinforce holistic transformation in academia, **School of Design Thinking (SoDT)** and **Intellect** hosted the '**1st National Conclave on Design Thinking for Academic Leaders**' at 8012 FinTech Design Center (the World's first Transformation Center dedicated to *Design Thinking Principles*) in **Chennai on Wednesday, March 27, 2024**. The main agenda of the Conclave centered around a pertinent theme, 'Talent 2040', to prepare students to face the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.



From left to right: **Prof. (Dr.) T G Sitharam**, Chairman of All India Council of Technical Education (AICTE); **Arun Jain**, CMD of Intellect and Founder of School of Design Thinking; and **Dr. Anbu Rathinavel**, Head of School of Design Thinking and Chief Design Officer of Intellect, **launching the Academia NxT Partner Program** at the '1st National Conclave on Design Thinking for Academic Leaders' in Chennai on Wednesday.

The dream of '**Talent 2040**' focused on transforming academic institutions to align with the changing needs of the future. To make this dream a reality, the key stakeholders, including the academic

institutions, faculty, and students, must work together to achieve this transformation. The ideal combination would involve an inspired institution equipped with motivated faculty members guiding a group of enthusiastic students. The first principles of Design Thinking would shift the mental model and facilitate this transformation towards a more innovative and productive future.

Prof. (Dr.) T G Sitharam, Chairman, All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), delivered the keynote address at the Conclave. **Arun Jain**, CMD of Intellect and Founder of the School of Design Thinking anchored a 'Masterclass' on "Leveraging Design Thinking® for Exponential Growth of Academic Institutions". The event also hosted a Panel Discussion and Fireside Chat with eminent speakers.

The Conclave witnessed the **launch of the Academia NxT Partner Program**, which provides an opportunity to shift the mental model of students and faculties – leading to learning excellence and talent development. The partnership provides the higher education institutions an avenue to create a culture of Design Thinking on campus through various contextual and composable initiatives. The mission of this partner program is to empower the senior management of the Partner Institutions to embark on a culture of Exponential Growth of the Institution using Design Thinking as a mindset. It is also designed to help faculty experience the power of Design The Thinking®, which would help them in their individual roles and play a role in the institution's growth.

In addition, the first '**Design Thinking Impact Awards**' were announced under five categories to recognise some of the Adopters of Design Thinking in the Academic and Startup Fraternity. The winners of the Inaugural Edition are:

- SRM Institute of Science and Technology for **Campus Ecosystem Design for Innovation**
- Noida Institute of Engineering & Technology for **Future Skills Design Framework**
- Startup TN for **Futuristic Policy & Governance Design**
- Indian Institute of Management-Calcutta for **Social Outreach Curriculum Design**
- Sairam Institutions for **Holistic Entrepreneurship & Innovation Design**

During his Keynote address, **Prof. (Dr.) T G Sitharam, Chairman of All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE)**, said, "We are currently in an era where innovation and entrepreneurship are highly valued. At AICTE, we foster promoting Design Thinking among technical institutions in India to create a culture of innovation, collaboration, and continuous improvement. Aligning on those lines, the '1st National Conclave on Design Thinking for Academic Leaders' provides participants with professional development, strategic insights, and impactful solutions to challenges. Through this event, academic leaders can shape the future of education and drive positive change in their institutions."

Commenting about the event, **Arun Jain, CMD of Intellect and Founder of the School of Design Thinking** said, "From the first principles of Design Thinking, as we delve into today's discourse, it's imperative to view our trajectory through the lens of our end customers: society, industry, and academia. In line with the New Education Policy's forward-looking ethos, we must cultivate a culture of innovation within academic institutions and industry research labs, fostering the genesis of safer, sustainable, and groundbreaking solutions. Hence, I propose 'Talent 2040' as our guiding theme, anchoring our efforts to prepare students for the demands of the future."

He added, "We have to establish task forces at different levels to achieve this vision. Introducing an assessment framework to evaluate Design Thinking capability for Institutes, establishing a task force at the district level to bring holistic transformation and curating a comprehensive curriculum in academia can help achieve the 'Talent 2040' agenda."

Dr. Anbu Rathinavel, Head of School of Design Thinking and Chief Design Officer of Intellect, said, "We take immense pride in hosting our '1st National Conclave on Design Thinking for Academic Leaders' that demonstrated the design mindset to help solve complex challenges as well as create

meaningful and immersive experiences. The forum provided the higher education institutions an avenue to creating a culture of Design Thinking on the campus through various contextual and composable initiatives.”

At Intellect, we began a journey over two and a half decades ago to shape the minds of adolescent school children by laying the foundations of Design Thinking while instilling in them a "Can do" spirit through Ullas Trust program. This initiative has impacted around two million students, and we have extended it to colleges by partnering with some of the institutions here. We have introduced a "Mentor-Mentee" model between college and school students to foster mutual collaboration and bonding. Additionally, our Social Impact initiative, Mission Samriddhi, has added a third dimension of rural and social connection for students and institutions and is being experimented with at some institutes.

In addition to celebrating successes and insights gained, the conclave set the stage for ongoing collaboration and partnerships to advance the 'Talent 2040' agenda. The School of Design Thinking remains committed to supporting educators, policymakers, and industry stakeholders in embracing design thinking as a driver of educational excellence and inclusive growth. As the curtains close on a successful inaugural conclave, the School of Design Thinking looks forward to building on the momentum generated, empowering individuals and organisations to shape a brighter future through design thinking.

About Intellect Design Arena Limited

[Intellect Design Arena Ltd.](#) has the world's largest cloud-native, API-led microservices-based multi-product platform for Global leaders in Banking, Insurance, and Capital Markets. Intellect pioneered Design Thinking to create cutting-edge products and solutions for banking and insurance, with design being the company's key differentiator in enabling digital transformation. FinTech 8012, the world's first design center for financial technology, reflects Intellect's commitment to continuous and impactful innovation, addressing the growing need for digital transformation. Intellect serves over 270 customers through offices in 57 countries and with a diverse workforce of solution architects, and domain and technology experts in major global financial hubs around the world.

About School of Design Thinking

[School of Design Thinking \(SoDT\)](#) is committed to creating awareness in the society at large about Design Thinking as a Human-centered Approach for problem solving, thus enabling ordinary people to do extraordinary things. Our belief in Design Thinking taking to society at large is not only to teach them about our Design Thinking Process and Design Thinking Tools to solve complex problems but instil it as a life skill. It believes in the practical application of Design Thinking and places equal emphasis on first 'Design the Thinking®' and then 'Thinking the Design'.

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