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Create New Programs And Strengthen Existing Ones: Suresh Ramanathan, Dean, Great Lakes Institute Of Management

In an interview with BW Businessworld, Dr. Suresh Ramanathan, Dean, Great Lakes Institute of Management talks about his new role and more.



Dr. Suresh Ramanathan started his third inning with Great Lakes Institute of Management, as a Dean. He succeeds Founder and Dean, Dr. Bala V Balachandran, distinguished global management thought leader and Padma Shri awardee, who will continue to guide the institution as its Chairman and Dean Emeritus.

Ramanathan is an eminent scholar and professor of marketing with a distinguished academic experience comprising of nine years at the world's top-ranked Booth School of Business at the University of Chicago and eight years at Mays School of Business at Texas A&M University as an Endowed Chair Professor.

His educational background includes a B. Tech from IIT [Delhi](#), an MBA from IIM Calcutta and a Ph.D. from the Stern School of Business at New York University. Dr. Ramanathan is a leading academic expert on consumer emotions and motivation. His work is highly cited in the academic literature and he has also received extensive coverage in the popular press, including New York Times, CBS News, Times of India, Los Angeles Times, and Science Daily. In an interview with BW Businessworld, Ramanathan talks about his new role and more.

What will be your key responsibilities in the new chair?

I see my role as an agent of both change and continuity. At Great Lakes, we pride ourselves on our culture and identity as an institution that builds socially sensitive business-ready leaders, who are futuristic in their orientation and committed to innovation and excellence. Implicit in this vision statement is the idea that innovation and change are important, but sensitivity to larger societal goals are equally important. It is this message that I will translate into action, and I define my responsibilities as such:

- a. Create new programs and strengthen existing ones, adopting new pedagogical approaches including a significantly greater emphasis on experiential and blended learning as required.
- b. Drive a strong research focus, combining rigor with relevance, so as to pursue knowledge creation that is important not just to organizations but to society at large.
- c. Create a new digitally transformed institution providing a seamless experience for all our stakeholders.

How will you channelize your exceptional academic experience in the development of the college?

I have been in academia for the last 22 years. One of the things I learned early on is that an academic is defined by three key dimensions – research, teaching, and service/institution-building. Our faculty are already doing a fantastic job on all three dimensions, but we need to push the envelope even further. One of the things I have been blessed with is a network of scholars around the world with whom I have collaborations on research or know otherwise. I will be tapping into this network, trying to build more bridges for our faculty and students. I envisage a digital platform for research,

where scholars from India (not just Great Lakes) can find opportunities to connect with those in other countries, develop ideas together, and collect data in India so as to address the most pressing research questions to which we do not have answers. Similarly, I will reach out to scholars reputed for their teaching to share their wisdom with our faculty, inviting them to conduct teaching workshops for us.

I will, of course, channel my teaching experience for the benefit of Great Lakes, and I plan to be a very active member of the teaching faculty in all our programs. In addition, I propose to pursue some specific lines of research, especially in the area of promoting healthy eating, which can benefit Indian society while putting Great Lakes on the research map.

What strategy you would own to make the college, a globally reputed business school?

Global reputations depend a lot on two key factors, one internal and the other external. The first factor is faculty research productivity. Any global ranking system weighs faculty productivity pretty highly. It is no surprise, therefore, that I will make research a very important area of focus in the coming months and years. We will ensure that our faculty are provided resources, training, and opportunities to connect with scholars around the world, so as to produce impactful work.

The second factor is student outcomes in terms of absolute salaries and salary increases. We believe we are already doing an amazing job in placing our students, with 100% placements every year and salary increases that are significantly higher than average. We believe it important to attract a diverse set of corporate partners who understand the value of working with a 21st Century institution that is hungry for change and generates a set of prospective employees who are fully prepared for the challenges of tomorrow. This will help us achieve a stronger outcome for our students on some of the relevant metrics. As the new dean of Great Lakes, I will be traveling far and wide to engage with our alumni, and current and prospective corporate partners with the simple message: Come visit us, and see why we are not just another B-School.

Great Lakes Institute of Management is ranked 18th by NIRF. What would you do to improve the ranking?

The NIRF rankings are comprehensive and weigh a lot of factors using several quantitative criteria. We perform very well on some of those factors but can do better on a few, such as research productivity. We are also a relatively young school, and as any marketing professor will tell you, "Perceptions are reality." We need to drive our perceptions among employers and students/alumni higher, and in the days and months

to come, we will be visible and on everybody's mind. Our agility, dynamism, and fearlessness will be evidenced by our actions.

It is the first B-school in India to offer full-time specialization in Analytics and also first to introduce AI and Machine Learning specialization. Do you plan to introduce more such specializations?

We are talking about the next steps. It is early days yet, so there is not much I can announce right now. But as they say in advertising: "Watch this space!"

Read online at - <http://www.businessworld.in/article/Create-New-Programs-And-Strengthen-Existing-Ones-Suresh-Ramanathan-Dean-Great-Lakes-Institute-Of-Management/08-08-2019-174521/>