



PROF. BALA V BALACHANDRAN

Founder, Dean & Chairman, Great Lakes Institute of Management

Padma Shri, 2001

Serves on the International Advisory Board of the

UniRazak at Kuala Lumpur

Executive Professor and Strategy Advisor to the Dean at the Bauer College, University of Houston

“Students’ success, the best medicine for the heart”

My tryst with B-Schools began in the late '60s when I helped 'Cartman' Ramasamy with faculty recruitment for IIM Bangalore. Before I knew it, 20 years had passed, it was 1990. The global economy was witnessing unprecedented growth and India was on the cusp of the IT revolution. I, on the other hand, had wowed the management department at Kellogg and working with Dean Don Jacobs had succeeded in bringing Kellogg to the list of the top 5 B-Schools in the US.

A joint project with UNDP and Kellogg to set up the Management Department at MDI, Gurugram, brought me back to the India. I had found the perfect avenue to serve my country, in my area of expertise, and thus my heart was set on putting India on the global B-School map.

Soon, the ISB at Hyderabad found a place on the said map and while my heart was filled with joy, it also, well, broke. It took a quintuple bypass surgery to fix it and while on the operating table, I had an epiphany. I figured I had been given

a new lease of life and I decided to seize the day. The thing about epiphanies is that they cut through the fog and bless you with clarity of thought and action. By the time I returned home from the hospital, I had the complete blueprint for Great Lakes Institute of Management in my head.

Being at the helm of management education in India has been a terrific experience – much has changed over the years in terms of B-School pedagogy, format, course content, student demographic, corporate expectation, faculty expertise, technology-driven processes etc.

The highest form of gratification for me is when I hear back from my students many years later – they are doing well in life and then tell me that I had a little something to do with it! If that is not the best medicine for the heart, I don't know what is. 📌

The author is also J L Kellogg Distinguished Professor of Accounting & Information Management, Northwestern University, USA