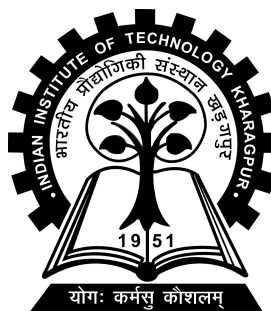# PROPOSALS

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Contents

Proposal 1

Setting up of an Incubation Cell

1.1 Aim

Through this proposal, we aim to:

- [ ] **Cultivating a Culture of Innovation:** The institute must provide a dynamic environment where creativity thrives, risk-taking is encouraged, and students embrace the spirit of entrepreneurship. By infusing this culture into the very fabric of our institution, the next generation of trailblazers can be inspired.

- [ ] **Nurturing Innovators:** Like tender saplings, young innovators require care, guidance, and nourishment. The Incubation Cell provides a fertile ground where their ideas can take root. Through mentorship, workshops, and hands-on experiences, they can be equipped with the skills and knowledge needed to navigate the entrepreneurial landscape.

- [ ] **Resource Empowerment:** Great ideas need more than just inspiration, they need resources. From access to cutting-edge labs and technology to funding

opportunities, it must be ensured that our student entrepreneurs have the tools necessary to turn their concepts into reality.

☐ **Networking and Collaboration:** The journey from idea to startup is rarely a solitary one. Our networking avenues connect students with industry experts, investors, and fellow innovators. Collaborations flourish, partnerships form and the collective energy propels these startups forward.

1.2 Overview and Current Scenario

Right now, at the Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur, there's a problem: not many students feel motivated to start their businesses because there isn't enough support for them. The way things are set up makes it hard for new ideas to turn into successful businesses. Moreover, students don't know about all the available help, which makes things even harder.

The proposed establishment of the Incubation Cell at Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur will boost its startup scene. This initiative aims to support student-led startups and provide resources for their success. The current lack of a structured ecosystem hinders the transformation of innovative ideas into successful ventures. The Incubation Cell envisions itself as a vital part of fostering innovation at Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur, providing a dynamic environment for growth and collaboration.

1.3 Groundwork

India's incubation ecosystem, driven by institutions like the Indian Institutes of Technology and Birla Institute of Technology and Science, Pilani, is dedicated to supporting technology-driven startups and fostering innovation. Each institution

offers tailored support, with the Foundation for Innovation and Technology Transfer at Indian Institute of Technology Delhi focusing on innovative startups within their first five years and the Society for Innovation & Entrepreneurship (SINE) at Indian Institute of Technology Bombay providing up to three years of support for IP-based technologies. Additionally, Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur's Imagineering Lab aids in concept design and technology realisation, while Birla Institute of Technology and Science, Pilani and Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati offer infrastructure support.

These institutions collectively contribute to fostering entrepreneurship and driving economic growth by providing mentorship, networking, and funding opportunities. Through their efforts, they create an environment conducive to innovation and business development, facilitating the commercialization of technology-driven solutions and solidifying India's position as a hub for innovation and entrepreneurship.

After engaging with prominent entities like the Wadhwani Foundation, various Incubators, Accelerators, and Venture Capital firms, all of whom express a strong interest in supporting startups at the Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur. Through these discussions, it became evident that there's a gap on campus – a lack of an organisation dedicated to bridging student startups with these invaluable resources.

On having conversations with Atal Aggarwal, a Board Member of the Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur US Alumni Foundation, regarding potential funding opportunities for startups emerging from Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur. His enthusiasm for this initiative is palpable, promising exciting prospects for budding entrepreneurs.

1.4 Implementation

Incubation Cell envisions itself as the beacon of support and guidance for startups emerging from the esteemed corridors of the Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur. Much akin to the first ray of sunlight that dispels darkness and heralds a new day, Incubation Cell seeks to energise, mentor, and support young entrepreneurs as they navigate the complexities of the startup ecosystem. The Cell will aim to cultivate a culture of innovation, collaboration, and excellence, positioning the Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur as a hub of entrepreneurial brilliance.

The core objectives briefly are as follows:

☐ **Facilitating Startup-Incubator Collaboration:** The Incubation Cell will serve as a vital link between campus-based incubators, guiding startups through the journey from idea to full-fledged incubation. Additionally, the Cell will collaborate with external incubators and venture capital firms, extending our support network to propel the exponential growth of our startups.

☐ **Setting up Co-working spaces for Startups:** The Cell can optimize existing infrastructure and establish fresh co-working hubs through funding from supportive foundations, nurturing a vibrant startup ecosystem on campuses. Our Incubation Cell will forge partnerships with co-working spaces nationwide, facilitating seamless access for our startups even during academic breaks.

☐ **Funding Support for Startups:** The Incubation Cell will play a pivotal role in facilitating fundraising endeavours for startups by leveraging our extensive Alumni Network and forging connections with Venture Capital firms. Through these avenues, the Cell will empower startups to secure the necessary funding to fuel their growth and success.

☐ **Provision of Essential Resources to Startups:** Building upon the aforementioned efforts, the Incubation Cell will extend crucial support to startups

by offering essential resources such as mentorship, software services, and more by collaborating with existing student organizations. These resources are pivotal in nurturing the growth of startups, equipping them with the guidance and tools needed to thrive in the competitive entrepreneurial landscape.

Incubation Cell's vision is not merely to support startups but to cultivate a thriving ecosystem of innovation and entrepreneurship at the Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur. Through targeted support, robust mentorship, and strategic initiatives, a new generation of trailblazing entrepreneurs will be empowered, propelling them toward sustainable success and societal impact. The Cell will invite stakeholders to join it in realising this vision and fostering a culture of innovation and excellence at the Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur.

1.5   Impact

If we briefly summarise the impact:

☐ **Significant Increase in Startup Activity:** Incubation Cell's support and resources would lead to a surge in startup activity on campus, with a higher number of students venturing into entrepreneurship and successfully launching their ventures.

☐ **Industry Partnerships and Collaborations:** Through Incubation Cell's industry-specific categorization and clustering, startups form partnerships and collaborations with relevant industry players, leading to innovation, market access, and potential investment opportunities.

☐ **Successful Ventures:** With initial seed funding and comprehensive support from Incubation Cell, a significant number of startups would achieve success, generating revenue, creating jobs, and contributing to the overall economy.

☐ **Cultural Shift Towards Entrepreneurship:** The Incubation Cell's presence would instil a culture of entrepreneurship and innovation across the campus, inspiring more students to pursue entrepreneurial paths and fostering an environment conducive to creativity and risk-taking.

☐ **Long-term Impact and Legacy:** The incubation Cell would leave a lasting legacy at the Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur, becoming synonymous with entrepreneurship and innovation. It would continue to nurture future generations of entrepreneurs, contributing to the institution's reputation as a hub for cutting-edge research and entrepreneurial excellence.

Overall, the successful implementation of the Incubation Cell would lead to a transformational shift in the startup ecosystem at the Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur, creating a dynamic environment where innovation thrives and entrepreneurial ventures flourish.

Proposal 2

Empowering Postgraduate and Research Scholar Students

2.1 Aim

The PG and RS students arrive on campus with high hopes and huge ambitions for their careers. Currently, certain issues are plaguing their development, both academic and non-academic. This proposal aims to provide a solid launchpad for PG and RS students by offering a result-driven, step-by-step solution to different categories of issues and grievances.

2.2 Overview and Current Scenario

The PG and RS students comprise nearly 54% of the student body at Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur, yet over the years, their issues and concerns have only compounded. It is important to pay urgent attention to every one of them to ensure that PG and RS students get the optimal conditions to express themselves and excel in their domain. Before setting out to solve all the problems simultaneously, it is

crucial to group the issues that they face under different sub-categories. These issues were uncovered during interactions with a host of relevant stakeholders as well as postgraduate students.

2.2.1   Academic opportunities

A majority of the postgraduate and RS students choose to enrol in the Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur due to the superlative research facilities and quality of academics offered by the institute. There are several areas in which the current system has proven inefficient and ineffective, especially considering the post-Covid scenario:

☐ **Lack of a streamlined structure for grievance redressal:** Unlike undergraduate students, who have the opportunity to offer feedback to their course instructors at the end of every semester, each RS works majorly with a single supervisor who might have only 3-4 Research scholars working under them. Thus, "anonymous feedback" needs to be dealt with differently in their case. The current situation provides the supervisors with powers that might be susceptible to misuse in certain cases.

☐ **Ineffective required to change one's supervisor:** If, after significant efforts from both sides, the RS still feels the need to change their supervisor, a proper system should ideally be in place that deals with every case on its own merits. Yet currently, the entire process is heavily dependent on the supervisor in question who pulls all the strings. This often results in PhD students either compromising by staying with the same Supervisor or dropping out altogether.

☐ **Lack of yearly conferences in each Department, Centre and School:** Consider an example. The business club conducts an event - Indian Case Challenge (ICC) which draws participation from some of the most reputed

Universities around the globe. This provides our students with a remarkable opportunity to participate in a global-standard event and enhances our Institute's brand image in global circles. The same, however, is lacking in the research domain where there is no mandate for every single Department, Centre and School to conduct Annual or Bi-Annual conferences and Research Expos.

2.2.2   Infrastructural issues

One of the major USPs of Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur is that as an Institute of Eminence, we have access to tremendous infrastructural facilities, in line and at par with some of the best Institutes globally. Yet, it would not be incorrect to say that post-COVID, the Central Research Facility (CRF) has not been maintained at the same level as is expected. Besides, the decision to integrate slot booking at CRF into a Faculty's ERP was a good one but even now, there remain way too many approvals required to get a singular slot from a student's perspective.

2.2.3   Placement and Internship opportunities

Both PG and RS carry an unparalleled level of specialised knowledge in their respective domains of study, which is very often relevant to the current Industry 4.0 standards. While this might not be suited for some General Management profiles, in general, various companies would pounce at the opportunity to hire such specialists. Yet, some deep-rooted and systemic issues significantly hinder the Placement and Internship opportunities for PG and RS students.

- ☐ **Placement season mismatch with the Doctoral thesis dissertation:** Currently, the last steps involved in a PhD student receiving their Doctoral degree are as follows:
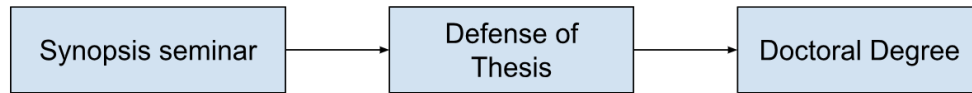
First the Research Scholar undergoes the Synopsis seminar and defends his Thesis before the panel, both of which done successfully the Research Scholar Student is awarded with the Doctorate from the Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur.

Here lies a major fallacy. Let us suppose an RS has scheduled their synopsis seminar in June and their defence thesis afterwards. If they are successful at the same, they will be declared eligible for a doctorate (similar to a UG student clearing all courses in their final semester). Currently, the ERP system wouldn't allow them to sit for campus placements, which they anyways couldn't have done barring their final year which means the concerned RS graduates out of Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur without availing of the CDC opportunity even once. Moreover, having spoken to several RS, I understand that postponing the Synopsis seminar is not a valid solution either as PhD students spend several years researching their chosen topic and postponing is not a viable solution either.

☐ **Lack of Assistance for Postgraduate Students during the Career Development Centre process:** It is worth noting that Postgraduate students sit for Internships in their first academic year of study at Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur. Even though they have completed their BTech previously, the dynamics at Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur have a unique set of difficulties, most significantly adjusting to the Curriculum Vitae building portal. While Undergraduate students have Student Welfare Group-allotted mentors, Hall seniors and several other avenues for guidance, 1st yr Postgraduate students often need help with the entire process.

2.3 Groundwork

Interactions with the Postgraduate Representative and Research Scholar Representative shed light on the academic and non-academic issues the respective students face. To understand the process of changing one's supervisor at other universities, some PhD students at universities like MIT, Stanford, and UCLA were contacted. The Dean, Outreach at MIT explained the administrative side of things in this process. Moreover, to understand the working at Central Research Facility (CRF), the Chairperson at CRF and some of the RS who had previously availed of the facilities there provided invaluable inputs.

2.4 Implementation

2.4.1 Proposal for Streamlined Grievance Redressal System

An effective grievance redressal system tailored to the needs of PG and RS students at Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur is to be planned. A platform where students can voice their concerns anonymously and receive timely resolution of grievances would be provided.

- ☐ **Introduction of an Anonymous Feedback Mechanism:** An online platform where PG and RS students can submit feedback anonymously regarding their academic and research experiences, including issues with supervisors or program structure.

- ☐ **Establishment of a Grievance Committee:** The committee will comprise of senior but neutral faculty members and student representatives to review and address each of the grievances impartially. This committee will be responsible for investigating complaints and implementing appropriate solutions.

Regular Feedback Sessions: Regular feedback sessions between supervisors and RS students to foster open communication and address concerns proactively. These sessions will provide a forum for students to voice their opinions and suggest improvements.

2.4.2 Proposal for Streamlined Supervisor Change Procedure

Recognizing the significance of a fair and transparent supervisor change procedure, a system that supports the academic and professional growth of PG and RS students must be implemented at Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur.

☐ **Clear Guidelines for Supervisor Change:** Developing comprehensive guidelines outlining the procedure for changing supervisors. These guidelines will include specific criteria for evaluating requests for supervisor changes, such as instances of academic conflict, lack of mentorship, or mismatched research interests. Additionally, the guidelines will outline the steps students need to follow to initiate the process, including documentation requirements and timelines.

☐ **Independent Review Committee:** To ensure fairness and impartiality in the supervisor change process, an independent review committee will be established. This committee will comprise faculty members from diverse departments and external experts with experience in academic mentorship and research supervision. The committee will be responsible for reviewing each request for supervisor change, evaluating the reasons provided by the student, and making recommendations for resolution.

2.4.3 Proposal for Departmental Conferences and Research Expos

In recognition of the importance of academic engagement and networking opportunities for PG and RS students, the organisation of departmental conferences and research expos at Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur is proposed. These events will provide platforms for students to showcase their research findings, exchange ideas, and build professional networks within their respective fields of study.

☐ **Mandatory Annual or Biannual Conferences:** Mandating each department, centre, and school which has Research Scholars enrolled under them to organise annual or biannual conferences and research expos. These events will serve as showcases for student research and innovation, allowing students to present their work to peers, faculty members, and industry professionals. By requiring participation from all academic units, it is aimed to promote a culture of academic engagement and collaboration across disciplines.

☐ **Funding Support:** To facilitate the organisation of conferences and expos, resources will be allocated to support event planning and logistics. This funding will cover expenses such as venue rental, audiovisual equipment, catering, and promotional materials. Additionally, financial support will be provided for student travel, accommodation, and conference registration fees to ensure equitable access to these opportunities for all PG and RS students.

☐ **Integration with Academic Curriculum:** Integrating participation in conferences and expos into the academic curriculum, via micro-credits to incentivize student engagement and recognize academic achievement. Students who present their research at these events will receive academic credit or other forms of recognition, such as certificates or awards. Integrating conference participation into the curriculum is aimed to emphasise the value of academic dissemination and promote a culture of excellence in research and scholarship.

2.4.4 Proposal for revamping facilities and slot allotment process at the Central Research Facility (CRF)

Despite being equipped with world-class infrastructure, the Central Research Facility (CRF) at IIT Kharagpur has experienced maintenance challenges post-COVID, leading to a decline in its overall quality. Additionally, the current slot allotment process, integrated into a Faculty's Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP), has become cumbersome for students due to the excessive approvals.

☐ **Streamlined Slot Allotment Process:** Simplifying the slot allotment process for the Central Research Facility by reducing the number of steps required for booking a slot. This will involve the development of a user-friendly online platform accessible through the student Enterprise Resource Planning system. Students will be able to browse available slots, select their desired time slots, and confirm bookings with minimal approval requirements.

☐ **Student-Centric Slot Booking:** To improve accessibility and convenience, transitioning the slot booking functionality from the Faculty's Enterprise Resource Planning to the student Enterprise Resource Planning system. This will empower students to directly manage their research activities, including slot bookings, without the need for intermediary approvals from faculty members. By providing students with more control over the booking process, access to Central Research Facility facilities will be expedited, and research workflows can be streamlined.

☐ **Enhanced Facility Maintenance:** In tandem with improving the slot allotment process, prioritising the maintenance and upkeep of Central Research Facility facilities to ensure optimal functionality and usability. This will involve regular inspections, preventive maintenance measures, and responsive repairs to address any infrastructure issues promptly. By maintaining a high

standard of facility upkeep, the reputation of IIT Kharagpur as an institution with world-class research infrastructure is aimed to be upheld.

2.5 Impact

☐ **Enhanced Visibility and Reputation:** Departmental conferences and research expos will showcase the academic achievements of Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur students, enhancing the institute's visibility and reputation both nationally and internationally. By providing platforms for students to present their research to a wider audience, highlighting the institute's strengths in research and innovation across various disciplines.

☐ **Professional Development Opportunities:** Participation in conferences and expos will offer students valuable opportunities for professional development, including networking, presentation skills development, and exposure to cutting-edge research in their fields of study. By engaging with peers, faculty members, and industry professionals, students will gain insights into current trends and challenges in their respective fields, enhancing their academic and professional growth.

☐ **Promotion of Interdisciplinary Collaboration:** Departmental conferences and research expos will facilitate interdisciplinary collaboration and knowledge exchange among students from different academic units and research areas. By bringing together students with diverse perspectives and expertise, these events will encourage interdisciplinary dialogue and collaboration, fostering innovation and creativity in research and scholarship.

☐ **Increased Transparency:** The introduction of an anonymous feedback mechanism will encourage more students to come forward with their concerns, leading to increased transparency in the academic and research environment.

☐ **Timely Resolution of Grievances:** By establishing a dedicated grievance committee and implementing regular feedback sessions, the aim is to ensure timely resolution of student grievances, thereby enhancing the overall student experience.

☐ **Improved Trust and Satisfaction:** A streamlined grievance redressal system will foster a sense of trust and satisfaction among PG and RS students, demonstrating our commitment to addressing their concerns and promoting a supportive learning environment.

☐ **Fair and Transparent Process:** Implementing clear guidelines and an independent review committee will ensure that the supervisor change process is fair and transparent. Students will have confidence that their requests will be evaluated objectively, regardless of their academic department or research area.

☐ **Support for Academic Growth:** Mentorship programs will offer students valuable support and guidance during supervisor transitions, helping them navigate challenges and make informed decisions about their academic and research pursuits. Providing access to experienced mentors is aimed at empowering students to advocate for their academic interests and pursue opportunities for professional development.

☐ **Retention of Talent:** A streamlined supervisor change procedure, coupled with robust support mechanisms, will contribute to the retention of talented students at Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur. By addressing issues related to academic supervision and mentorship, instances of student attrition are to be reduced and promote a culture of academic excellence and inclusivity .

Proposal 3

Revamping the Operations of the Career Development Centre

3.1 Aim

The primary objective of this proposal is to embark on a thorough overhaul of the Career Development Centre within our prestigious institute. This initiative seeks to revamp the Career Development Centre's operational framework, with a strategic focus on refining existing protocols, fostering greater efficiency, and ultimately elevating the level of student involvement and success in securing desirable placements.

By undertaking this restructuring endeavour, the aim is to implement systematic improvements that will enhance the overall effectiveness of the Career Development Centre. This involves reevaluating current processes, identifying areas for enhancement, and implementing innovative strategies to better cater to the evolving needs of our student body.

3.2 Overview and Current Scenario

☐ **Hindrance to utilising its true potential due to heavy workload:** Presently, the Career Development Centre operates with 4th-year undergraduate and 2nd-year postgraduate students where they act as placement coordinators overseeing both placement and internship drives. The 3rd-year Career Development Centre department representatives offer auxiliary support primarily during the placement drive. This setup has led to an undue burden on the students, resulting in potential gaps in coordination and efficiency.

☐ **Delay in the initiation of the process for the new academic session:** Usually, the declaration of the New Student Placement Committee Members for the upcoming academic session is made in June, while the already-existing Student Placement Committee Members' tenure ends in April. As a result of this, there is a critical gap of 2.5 months that exists between April and mid-June, during which no placement committee members are available for approaching companies, thereby impeding the continuity and effectiveness of the placement process.

☐ **Need for more core opportunities for the students:** The Career Development Centre provides a platform for students to pursue their careers in the most suitable organization. However, the core opportunities that are being provided to the students can still be improved by involving the department stakeholders with the Career Development Centre.

☐ **Need for a better Career Development Centre website:** The college placement website of the Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur is currently beset with numerous issues, rendering several features designed to assist students in their preparation non-functional. These technical shortcomings not only hinder the smooth operation of the platform but also impede students' access to vital resources essential for their career readiness. The website is the only first point of contact for potential recruiters as well.

To completely revamp the college placement website of the Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur, enlist professional web developers for a modern redesign, prioritize user needs, ensure mobile responsiveness, conduct thorough testing, and implement continuous improvement measures.

3.3 Groundwork

☐ Following discussions with current and previous members of the placement committee, namely Mr Shobhit Mahajan, Mr Akshat Sharma, and Mr Riyan Biswas, it has become apparent that significant shortcomings exist within our Career Development Centre (CDC) system.

☐ They have highlighted the urgent necessity for a thorough overhaul, stressing the importance of enlarging the team to effectively address the increasing demands.

☐ Their insights underscore the critical need for reform and expansion to ensure the CDC is better equipped to serve the evolving needs of our student body and improve their chances of securing desirable placements.

☐ The placement processes of peer institutions such as Indian Institute of Technology Delhi (IIT-D), Indian Institute of Technology Bombay (IIT-B), Indian Institute of Technology Madras (IIT-M), and Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur (IIT-K) were meticulously examined as part of our groundwork.

☐ Notably, it was observed that their teams were considerably larger and they strategically involved students in their second and third years in the placement process.

☐ This decentralized approach not only expands the scope and efficiency of their placement efforts but also fosters valuable skills and a sense of ownership among students.

3.4 Implementation

The implementation process requires various steps which need to be catered to with equal priorities.

3.4.1 Realignment of the roles and responsibilities of the student body

☐ With the abolition of the Dual Degree program at IIT Kharagpur, the role of Student Placement Committee Member should be transitioned from 4th-year undergraduate students to 3rd-year undergraduate students, with the selection process remaining unchanged. The only adjustment will be the shift from 4th-year to 3rd-year students in the role of Student Placement Committee Member, such that 4th-year students can focus on their placements.

☐ 4th-year undergraduate students will be serving as overall placement coordinators, who will be selected from among the 3rd-year undergraduate students who had previously served as Student Placement Committee Members. The selection process will be overseen by the Career Development Centre Chairperson and other relevant stakeholders. Selection criteria will primarily consider the contributions made by candidates during their tenure as Student Placement Committee Members. The responsibility of the Overall Placement Coordinator entails overseeing the overall placement and internship process, and guiding Student Placement Committee Members whenever necessary and required.

☐ 2nd-year students will be strategically appointed as Career Development Centre Department Representatives to offer essential support to the Placement Committee Members.

3.4.2 Formation of Departmental Career Development Centre Committees for Undergraduate, Postgraduate and Research Scholars

☐ There will be CDC departmental committees separately formed for the undergraduate students, postgraduate students and research scholars aiming to provide better career opportunities to the students specific to their departments, with the Training and Placement In-Charge of every department acting as the Professor in Charge.

☐ The functioning of these committees would involve making up a list of the companies that are relevant to their respective departments and communicating this to their respective representatives to the Institute Senate i.e. Undergraduate Representative/ Postgraduate Representative/ Research Scholar Representative.

☐ The Representatives to the Institute Senate (Undergraduate Representative/ Postgraduate Representative/ Research Scholar Representative), after taking suggestions from the departmental representatives of the respective departments, will coordinate with the Overall Placement Coordinators.

3.4.3 Reconstruction of the Career Development Centre website

☐ The Career Development Centre website at the Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur aims to be a comprehensive resource for students seeking to build successful careers. One key feature is the inclusion of insights from former students who have achieved success in their respective fields. These insights provide valuable real-world perspectives and advice, offering current students inspiration and guidance as they navigate their career paths.

☐ Additionally, the website will offer roadmaps tailored to various career paths, providing step-by-step guidance on the actions and milestones students should aim for to succeed in their chosen fields. These roadmaps will be complemented by various resources, including articles, videos, online courses, and networking opportunities, all designed to help students develop the skills and knowledge necessary for their desired careers.

3.5 Impact

☐ **Efficient Workflow Enhancement:** By strategically realigning roles, a framework that promotes a fairer allocation of responsibilities can be established, ultimately easing the weight on senior students and fostering a harmonious, efficient workflow that maximizes productivity and collaboration.

☐ **Enhancing Department - Career Development Centre Communication:** The proposal suggests involving departmental representatives from the Students' Council to improve communication between the Career Development Centre (Career Development Centre) and students. These representatives would share information about placements, internships, and career opportunities with their departments, enhancing students' awareness and support. This initiative aims to streamline communication and increase student engagement in career development within the institution.

☐ **Modified Career Development Centre website:** Through modern redesign and prioritization of user needs, the platform will offer enhanced usability. The inclusion of success stories from former students will boost engagement, while tailored career roadmaps and diverse resources will provide structured guidance. Ensuring mobile responsiveness and implementing continuous improvement measures will further enhance user experience, making the platform more effective in helping students navigate their career paths.

Proposal 4

Enhancing Mental Well-being at Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur

4.1 Expanding the scope of Counselling Centre

Aim

Since its inception in 2009, the Counselling Centre at the Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur has been a pivotal element in supporting the mental well-being of its students. Over the years, as the student population has expanded significantly, the dynamics of student life and the associated challenges have also evolved. Concurrently, there has been a notable increase in the number of students seeking mental health support, underscoring the pressing need for the centre's services. However, with changing times come changing needs. The landscape of mental health awareness has shifted towards a more inclusive and comprehensive understanding that wellness encompasses not just the absence of any illness but the holistic well-being

of individuals. In light of these developments and the progressive increase in student engagement with mental health services, a thorough revamping of the existing system is overdue. This proposal aims to transition the current Counselling Centre into a Student Wellness Centre, signifying a broadened scope that extends beyond counselling to include preventive, developmental, and well-being enhancement services.

4.1.1 Renaming of Counseling Centre

Overview and Current Scenario

The term "Counseling Centre" traditionally evokes a notion of crisis intervention rather than holistic well-being, potentially deterring individuals who do not perceive their situations as dire enough for intervention or who fear the stigma associated with mental health issues. This perception has been recognised to significantly reduce the likelihood of students seeking the support they need.

Renaming the centre to "Student Wellness Centre" is a strategic move towards rebranding mental health services on campus, aligning with contemporary approaches to mental well-being. This new title encapsulates a broader spectrum of services beyond traditional counselling, encompassing preventive care, wellness education, stress management, and resources for personal development. It signals a shift from a pathology-focused model to a wellness and growth model, aiming to foster a culture where seeking support is viewed as a positive and proactive step towards personal development.

Groundwork

In reviewing mental health service naming conventions across various universities, including the University of Victoria, University of Saskatchewan, Ohio State University, McMaster University, University of Cincinnati, and Boston College, it's clear that a trend towards using terms like "Student Wellness Centre" correlates with higher student engagement. This approach reduces the stigma of seeking mental health support, as these institutions report a welcoming and inclusive atmosphere within their wellness services.

Interaction with members of the General Body, further supports this observation, indicating a general unease with the current naming of the Counseling Centre, which may deter them from utilising its services. This collective insight underscores the importance of re-branding our centre to a name that fosters a more positive and open environment for seeking mental health and wellness support.

Implementation

The transition to the Student Wellness Centre will be supported by a comprehensive communication strategy to inform the student body of the expanded services, the philosophy behind the name change, and how they can benefit from the centre's offerings. This will be achieved through campus-wide campaigns, informational sessions, and collaboration with student organisations to spread awareness and encourage participation.

In conclusion, renaming the Counseling Centre to the Student Wellness Centre is a strategic step towards transforming how mental health and well-being services are perceived and accessed on campus. It reflects a modern and inclusive approach to student support, promoting a healthier, more vibrant campus culture where every student is empowered to thrive.

Impact

☐ **Increased Accessibility and Engagement:** The name "Student Wellness Centre" implies a welcoming space for all students, regardless of whether they are facing a crisis, seeking personal growth, or simply needing a space to relax and rejuvenate. It encourages students to utilise the centre's resources without waiting for a problem to escalate to a crisis point, promoting early intervention and support.

☐ **Reduced Stigma:** By focusing on wellness rather than solely on counselling, the centre can play a pivotal role in destigmatising mental health support. It presents mental well-being as an integral part of overall health, akin to physical fitness, thereby normalising the pursuit of mental and emotional health services.

☐ **Holistic Support Services:** The rebranding supports expanding services to include workshops, group sessions, and activities focused on various aspects of wellness, including physical health, mental resilience, stress management, and emotional intelligence. This holistic approach acknowledges the multifaceted nature of student well-being, catering to a broader range of needs and interests.

☐ **Promoting a Wellness Culture on Campus:** The Student Wellness Centre symbolises the institute's commitment to fostering a supportive, healthy, and vibrant campus environment. It sets a precedent for wellness as a community value, encouraging students, faculty, and staff to prioritise and actively engage in wellness initiatives.

4.1.2 Diversification of Counseling Services at the Student Wellness Centre

Overview and Current Scenario

The mental health landscape within educational institutions is increasingly recognising the importance of diversity in counselling services. This diversity is not just in terms of the demographic backgrounds of the counsellors but also their therapeutic approaches, areas of expertise, and personal counselling styles. Introducing visiting counsellors from Kolkata to the Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur's proposed Student Wellness Centre is a strategic response to our student population's growing and diversifying needs. This approach enhances the breadth and depth of mental health support available on campus by bringing in professionals with a wide range of experiences and specialisations.

Groundwork

☐ Initial consultations with the members of the General Body highlighted a demand for a broader range of counselling services and approaches. They revealed an interest in having access to different therapeutic styles and specialists in areas not currently covered by the existing team.

☐ I investigated several universities with successful visiting counsellor programs to understand the structure, benefits, and challenges of such models. The mental health support model at the Indian Institute of Technology Bombay, established in 1987, featuring 6 permanent Counsellors, 6 visiting Counsellors, and a permanent Psychometrician, showcases a practical approach to providing comprehensive and specialised mental health services. This model's success underscores the value of diversifying counselling resources to meet a wide range

of student needs. It serves as a compelling example for the proposal to introduce visiting Counsellors, suggesting that such a structure can significantly enhance the quality and accessibility of mental health support for students.

☐ After discussions with various counselling agencies and independent practitioners in Kolkata namely Mansitherapy, Caring Minds and Dr Gautam Saha, an expert in Rehabilitation Counselling, these professionals have confirmed interest and willingness to engage in a visiting counsellor program at the Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur. With their diverse specialisations, these individuals expressed enthusiasm about contributing to the student wellness initiative, indicating a promising foundation for the proposed diversification of counselling services.

☐ After conversations with members affiliated with Ambar, the Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur's LGBTQIA+ support group, they highlighted the mental health challenges and stigmas unique to the LGBTQIA+ community on campus. These discussions underlined the need for specialised counselling services, trained professionals, and a supportive environment tailored to LGBTQIA+ students, emphasising confidentiality, acceptance, and understanding.

Implementation and Collaboration

The proposal involves a collaborative model where diverse visiting counsellors of different portfolios work together with a permanent psychometrician and the existing counselling staff. This model is based on mutual respect for each professional's varied expertise and is designed to enhance, rather than replace, the current counselling framework. Each of the visiting counsellors will be assigned one day of the week, ensuring their availability from 10 am to 6 pm, providing a consistent and comprehensive support system for students throughout the week.

☐ The selection of visiting counsellors will be based on a mix of their therapeutic approaches, expertise areas, and their experience with demographic and psychological issues relevant to the student community. This is the proposed list of visiting counsellors based on their expertise in different fields: Mental Health Counsellor, Substance Abuse Counsellor, Rehabilitation Counsellor, and LGBTQIA+ Counsellor, to name a few. This list extensively depends on the requirements of the General Body.

☐ Integrating a permanent Psychometrician into the Student Wellness Centre will significantly enhance the centre's capabilities by providing specialised assessments and insights into students' psychological profiles. This specialist will conduct in-depth diagnostic tests, support counsellors with precise data on students' mental health needs, and contribute to tailored therapeutic strategies. Additionally, the Psychometrician will play a key role in research, program evaluation, and developing educational workshops based on their findings, thus elevating the overall effectiveness of student mental health services.

The visiting counsellors will complement the existing services by offering additional perspectives and specialisations. Continuity of care, especially for students already engaged with specific counsellors, will be a priority, with measures in place to ensure that students can continue seeing their preferred counsellors or seamlessly transition to others if desired.

Impact

Broadening the Spectrum of Support: Integrating counsellors with varied expertise, specialities, and therapeutic techniques enriches the range of services available. This diversity empowers students by providing comprehensive support options, facilitating a better match between their individual needs and the counselling approaches offered.

Quality of Care: Visiting counsellors, active in diverse settings outside of the Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur, bring fresh perspectives and ongoing, real-world experience to their sessions. This exposure to a broader spectrum of client cases and continuous professional development can enhance the quality of care provided to students.

Emergency Support: Maintaining the pre-existing permanent counsellors on campus, alongside the visiting counsellors, ensures that immediate, high-level support is available for crises. This blend of availability and specialised expertise is crucial for effectively addressing acute mental health emergencies.

Precision in Diagnosis and Treatment: A psychometrician enhances the accuracy of psychological assessments, leading to more precisely tailored interventions for individual students, thereby improving therapeutic outcomes.

4.2 Initiation of Meditation Sessions at the Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur

4.2.1 Overview

In response to the growing awareness of mental health and wellness within the academic community at the Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur, this proposal seeks to introduce a structured meditation program. By leveraging the existing yoga room facilities, the program aims to provide a comprehensive approach to wellness by incorporating meditation sessions alongside discussions on mental and physical health topics. This initiative not only complements the physical wellness activities already offered but also addresses the mental and emotional well-being of the student body and faculty.

4.2.2   Groundwork

During the Meditation and Mental Health Lecture, Prof. Aurobinda Routray from the Department of Electrical Engineering shared valuable insights into the structure and outcomes of these sessions. Prof. Routray conducts guided meditation sessions at his residence for about 30 students (both undergraduate and postgraduate) every week. Each session, lasting approximately 40 minutes, is followed by a 15-minute discussion on topics related to mental peace and happiness. Prof. Routray, who has also conducted a seminar on the scientific benefits of meditation and has research experience in this area, has inspired the proposal to implement similar sessions at an institutional level. He has committed to assisting in establishing and running these sessions, along with other interested faculty members, indicating a solid foundation of support for this initiative.

4.2.3   Implementation

Meditation Sessions: The core of this proposal involves dedicating the yoga room for meditation purposes once a week for a 1.5-hour session in the evening. These sessions will be divided into two parts:

☐ The first 45 minutes will focus on group meditation led by a professional meditation tutor. Professors are willing to guide us through the meditation techniques, which can be passed on to a student representative for later sessions. This segment will introduce participants to various meditation techniques, aiming to cultivate mindfulness, reduce stress, and enhance overall mental clarity.

☐ The following 45 minutes will be dedicated to discussions on topics related to wellness, such as healthy lifestyle choices, the importance of breath control, achieving happiness at work, and the scientific benefits of meditation. These

discussions will be led by guest speakers, including professors willing to collaborate, as well as experts from the Centre for Excellence of Indian Knowledge Systems.

Introducing structured meditation sessions at the Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur represents a holistic approach to wellness, recognising the interconnectedness of physical, mental, and emotional health. By providing a space for meditation and discussion, this initiative aims to enrich the campus culture, promoting a balanced lifestyle that supports academic excellence and personal growth.

Collaboration with Academic and Research Entities: A vital component of this initiative is the collaboration with the Centre for Excellence of Indian Knowledge System and faculty members who have researched meditation. By integrating scientific insights and research findings into the program, participants can better understand the physiological and psychological impacts of meditation practices. Notably, there has been the development of a product by a team of Professors from the Department of Electrical Engineering led by Professor Aurobinda Routray that illustrates the reduction of stress levels through thermal imaging during meditation sessions will be showcased to underline the tangible benefits of regular practice.

4.2.4   Impact

Enhanced Well-being: Regular meditation has been scientifically proven to reduce stress, improve concentration, and improve overall emotional well-being. This program aims to make these benefits accessible to the Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur community.

Educational Value: By including discussions on related wellness topics, the program serves an educational purpose, empowering participants with knowledge about maintaining a healthy lifestyle and the importance of mental health care.

Community Building: These sessions are anticipated to foster a sense of community among participants, creating a support network that encourages sharing experiences and strategies for managing stress and achieving personal and academic goals.

Proposal 5

Refining Hall Management Centre Verticals

5.1 Aim

The proposal aims to enhance the involvement of students in the Hall Management Centre's (HMC) activities and bridge the gap between the students and the administration. The HMC currently poses little accountability to the student community, and empowering students with clearly defined roles and responsibilities will enable the HMC officials to be better aware of the students' issues. Together, everyone can make more well-rounded decisions.

5.2 Overview and Current Scenario

Currently, the Hall Management Centre's work and its various verticals have minimal representations of students, even though their work directly influences the student community. Right now, no centralised verticals within HMC have the participation of student representatives from Halls of Residences even though several facets of

working life on campus, such as fire management, mess management, maintenance, etc., come under its purview. After speaking to relevant stakeholders in depth about this issue and having detailed talks with them, there is a realisation that the Hall Management Centre requires a revamp with increased representation of students within HMC, to look after the needs of the student community.

5.3   Groundwork

The Chairman, HMC along with Coordinating Wardens emphasised the need to involve students in the HMC verticals. To gauge the perspective of the student representatives regarding the prevailing scenario in mess and night canteens, the General Secretary Mess of several Halls of Residence were contacted. The Manager at Lal Bahadur Shastri Hall of Residence was contacted to understand the overall issues faced in managing the Hall Workers.

5.4   Implementation

To achieve the outcomes mentioned above, there is a need for the formation of the following student-comprised committees to work in coordination with HMC:

5.4.1   Staff Management Committee (SMC)

The composition of the Staff Management Committee shall be:

☐ Coordinating Warden Maintenance

☐ Wardens/Assistant Warden(Maintenance) of concerned Halls of Residences

☐ Vice President, Technology Students' Gymkhana

☐ Hall Manager from each Hall of Residence

☐ Hall President and Second Senate Member from each Hall of Residence

The Staff Management Committee (SMC) is crucial for ensuring all staff members, whether on contract or full-time, work well and are appropriately managed. This helps create a good working atmosphere for everyone. Having student representatives on the committee ensures good communication between the staff and the student community. This is important because many staff members have direct roles in serving students.

5.4.2   Maintenance & Welfare Committee (MWC)

The composition of the Maintenance & Welfare Committee shall be:

☐ Coordinating Warden Maintenance

☐ Vice President, Technology Students' Gymkhana

☐ 1 General Secretary Students' Welfare, Technology Students' Gymkhana

☐ 1 General Secretary Maintenance from each Hall of Residence

The Maintenance & Welfare Committee (MWC) has a significant role in ensuring things are fixed across essential places at the Hall of Residences. Having student representatives will ensure students' voices are heard and things get better for everyone.

5.4.3   Hall Allotment Committee (HAC)

The composition of the Hall Allotment Committee shall be:

☐ Coordinating Warden Allotment

☐ Vice President, Technology Students' Gymkhana

☐ Hall President and Second Senate Member from each Hall of Residence

The Hall Allotment Committee (HAC) is in charge of putting students into different Halls of Residence. After speaking to HMC officials, the importance of utilising student representation for assigning Halls to 1st yr freshman students and 2nd-year Undergraduate students was understood. The student representatives will also aid the Hall Allotment Committee Members in dealing with requests for hall change by any student at IIT Kharagpur.

5.5 Impact

This proposal can significantly and profoundly impact the lives of the student community.

☐ **Enhanced Student Engagement:** By involving students in the various verticals of the Hall Management Centre (HMC), the aim is to create a more inclusive and student-centric environment. This increased involvement will ensure that the needs and concerns of the student community are directly addressed, leading to a more effective and responsive management and grievance redressal system.

☐ **Tailored Solutions:** Including student representatives from different Halls of Residence will provide diverse perspectives and insights into each hall's unique needs and preferences. This will enable the HMC to tailor its services and policies to meet the specific requirements of every student better, enhancing overall satisfaction and well-being.

☐ **Empowerment and Ownership:** Involving students in the governance of the HMC will foster a sense of ownership and responsibility among the student body. By actively participating in the decision-making processes, students will feel empowered to contribute to improving their living and learning environment, fostering a stronger sense of community and belonging.