

IIT-Madras Launches new programme to boost women leadership

New Delhi, March 08: Indian Institute of Technology-Madras has launched a new programme to boost its women leadership with an endowment fund raised from its alumni and CSR grants.

Named 'Women Leading IITM' (WLI), the programme will make grants every year to accelerate the careers of women technologists and provide a supportive environment for women to thrive at IIT Madras. The aim is to help accelerate efforts to improve the number of women students, faculty, staff and creating opportunities for success.

The Institute is planning to raise an endowment of US dollars two million by the end of 2021. In the first year itself, it will be aimed to grant Rs. 70 lakhs for various initiatives.

The goals of the 'Women Leading IITM' program will include increasing the percentage of women faculty in Assistant Professorships to 20% from the current 15%, generating 30% of all faculty applications from women candidates and establishment of an award for women faculty in leadership. The grantees under the programme will be expected to graduate to leadership roles within the institute and become next-generation ambassadors for enabling a gender-balanced Institute.

Elaborating on the vision behind the initiative, Prof. Bhaskar Ramamurthi, Director, IIT Madras, said, "IIT Madras has made good progress in the last several years in increasing the percentage of women in the student population, from the undergraduate level to the doctoral programme. The participation of women in the non-teaching staff is also very good, and we are making every effort to close the gap in the case of faculty. The WLI programme will be a powerful catalyst to enable us to reduce the hurdles faced by women students, faculty and staff at IIT Madras to achieve their full potential."

The major objectives of this program would include acceleration of recruitment of women faculty, run programs that provide physical and emotional safety for women, and create opportunities for women faculty and postdoctoral fellowships to do interdisciplinary work that can yield international research recognition.

Besides, it will make special efforts to support the administration deliver a new/ better mentorship program for women faculty as well as to encourage leadership amongst women faculty (HoDs, Chairpersons, Deans, Director) and seek to overcome hurdles to career growth for women faculty members in the form of financial and other supports such as a grant to pay for small-child travel while attending a conference, or a grant to provide for better child care while at work (for children up to age 5).

Among other things, outreach programs will be organised in the form of visits to other institutes to get the word out and recruit women post-docs, visiting women faculty, as well as full-time women faculty.

An IIT -Madras press release said that corporates and alumni wishing to contribute could do so through:

<https://joyofgiving.alumni.iitm.ac.in/endowments/other/women-leading-iitm-endowment>

Keywords: women, leadership, endowment, alumni, CSR, grant, supportive, students, faculty, ambassador, gender-balanced, catalyst, hurdle, potential, recruitment, safety, interdisciplinary, international, research

VP/DBT/SP/08/03/2021