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**AANA Midwest
Chapter**

IISc AANA Midwest Chapter Newsletter

May 2023



2022 AANA National Meeting in Atlanta



2018 AANA National Meeting in Chicago

From the Newsletter Editor, Manashi Nath (nathm@mst.edu):

Please feel free to share your thoughts, comments, accomplishments, activities, and dreams with the purpose of giving back to IISc that helped us build our future.

Message from the President

I am honored and humbled to lead the IISc AANA Midwest Chapter with the help of a vibrant team of dedicated volunteers. Our Executive Committee members (see page 8) are very active, passionate, dedicated, and committed to increase the chapter activities, such as membership outreach, organizing alumni get together, fundraising for women fellowship, and giving back to our beloved alma mater IISc.

Following the mission and vision of the IISc Alumni Association of North America (AANA), the Midwest Chapter meets once a month to discuss how to connect with IISc and help our alma mater and alumni. Many significant activities took place in the past year. In April 2022, the Chapter organized a special lecture meet (virtual) with the IISc Director, Professor Govindan Rangarajan, who spoke on the exciting developments at IISc including the establishment of the medical school, historic philanthropic contributions received from donors and alumni and was engaged in an interactive Q&A session. More than 175 alumni joined the meeting; the details were published in the July 2022 Newsletter. We also organized a meeting with Dr. Phaneendra Yalavarthy, Chair, Office of Development and Alumni Affairs (ODAA) and his team to explore collaboration opportunities between AANA and IISc.

In August 2022, several of our members attended the AANA National meeting in Atlanta, co-organized a panel on AI, and participated in various activities. Prof. Rangarajan and the NSF Director, Dr. Sethuraman Panchanathan (also an alum) were the chief guests. In October 2022, the MW Chapter did a fundraising campaign to establish three fellowships for IISc undergraduate women students for four years each. For details, visit <https://odaa.iisc.ac.in/iisc-aana-midwest-chapter-fellowship-for-women-in-science/>. We are grateful to our Chapter alumni for their generous contributions and to the AANA board for their support. In May 2023, the Chapter came forward with financial support to help a young cancer warrior and recent alumnus, Sivaji Nukathoti, of Bangalore. (See page 5 for new opportunities for contributions.)

Let us congratulate Prof. Bharat Bhargava for receiving IISc Distinguished Alumnus Award in 2022. We thank him, Dr. Muthu Sivarajan, Dr. Sivakumar Sastry, and Ganapathy Dharmasankar for serving on the EC in 2022. We recruited new EC members including Dr. Dharma Pally, a 2021 alumnus (see page 8).

On behalf of the Executive Committee of the IISc AANA Midwest Chapter, we cordially invite you to participate in the Annual In-person Meeting in Chicago on June 17, 2023, at the *Vivekananda Vedanta Society of Chicago*, 14630 S. Lemont Road, Homer Glen, IL 60491. (For details, please see page 6.)

Please stay engaged with chapter activities and let us know how you wish to help and get involved.

With warm regards,



Sajal Das, President
IISc AANA Midwest Chapter



Undergraduate Fellowships to Enhance Women in STEM

IISc being one of the premier research institutions in India suffers from the perils experienced by most institutes of higher education in terms of under-representation of women in STEM fields. Over the past several years, IISc has actively sought various initiatives to increase enrollment of female students in different disciplines including different scholarship schemes available to incoming female students. The esteemed alums of this institution also discussed various ways to eradicate this inequality and initiated a need-based scholarship program to support women undergraduates for the full length of their degree program. Several donors from IISc Alumni Midwest Chapter came forward to raise funds that eventually supported 3 women undergraduate scholars raising the number of female undergraduates admitted to the program to 20% in 2022. These students came from various parts of the country and were chosen based on merit and need. The recipients expressed their ecstasy and joy in receiving the scholarship and shared how this needed assistance will help them towards reaching their aspiration goals.

From the Fellowship Recipients:

Bio-sketch

B. Thamaraiselvi, is currently a first year undergraduate student enrolled in B.Sc degree. She is a very inquisitive person and has always been fascinated by the world of science. Originally from Tiruvarur, Tamil Nadu, she enjoys playing chess and badminton. She is also interested in ecology and wants to pursue career towards that direction. She identifies herself as a people person who loves to make social interactions as one of the department representatives in the UG program.



“The IISc-AANA Scholarship is a great undertaking to aid the students of research to help build their career. I am grateful to be a beneficiary of this act. This has helped me to be more independent and has raised my morale. I acknowledge the sponsors and the institute for this support and am deeply thankful.”

- B. Thamaraiselvi

Bio-sketch

Manjaree is research student pursuing her B.Sc. from IISc Bangaluru. She is in her 1st year. She did her schooling from Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya. She is committed to do research.



"The AANA Fellowship is a program supporting me in research and scholarly activities. The AANA Fellowship is having a significant impact on my academic pursuits and progress towards aspirational goals by providing opportunities to gain new knowledge and skills, as well as funding to support research and scholarly activities. It is helping me in progressing towards my aspirational goals."

- Manjaree

Bio-sketch

Debanjali is from from Ranaghat, Nadia, West Bengal. Her father is a group C government employee and mother is a housewife. She started her schooling at government aided primary school. Debanjali secured 4th place in her state in a government organized scholarship test while she was in 4th standard. Then she was admitted to Fulia Balika Vidyalaya (West Bengal Board), where she studied from 5th to 12th grade. She scored 94.85% and 97.2% marks in 10th and 12th board exams, respectively. She also appeared for WBJEE, IAT, JEE Main, JEE Advanced and managed to get admission offers from Jadavpur Engineering College, IISER Kolkata, IIT Madras, IIST and her dream destination IISc. She is now a 1st year UG student at IISc.



"As I came of an economically weak family, the AANA fellowship will help me a lot to afford the expenditures of my education. The fellowship is also a source of inspiration to me to make progress in my academic career in future and to achieve aspirational goals to fulfil my dreams."

- Debanjali Ghosh

Note of Thanks from IISc

Indian Institute of Science (IISc) has a legacy of more than 115 years and has always been known for academic excellence and rigor. The undergraduate (UG) four-year program, B.S. (Research), has been a flagship program of IISc, where research methodologies are integrated into the UG curriculum. This program has always attracted the best students across India. About seven years ago, a review of this program made the faculty body of IISc realize the gender imbalance among UG students, where women students were less than 20%. This led to the Faculty Senate approve supernumerary quota of 20% for women students to ensure that at least one in five students in the UG program will be women, requiring the UG program to attract women students from new venues. While students are admitted using KVPY, JEE, and NEET, those admitted through JEE and NEET were not provided any fellowship. IISc decided to provide fellowships to those students from its own resources. To make it sustainable and attractive, the institute reached out to the alumni for contributions towards women fellowships. IISc AANA Midwest Chapter rose to the occasion and provided funds for three women fellowships. It is heartening to see that all women candidates admitted with JEE and NEET qualifications are now supported through the alumni instituted fellowships, and IISc AANA Midwest Chapter leads from the front. Moreover, this year the women candidates admitted into the UG program crossed 20% and the credit should go to all alumni who contributed selflessly to the gender parity mission of IISc. Personally, I wish to thank all contributors of IISc AANA Midwest Chapter Women Fellowships, and we need more champions.

– Phaneendra K. Yalavarthy, Ph.D.
Chair, Office of Development and Alumni Affairs
Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore

New Opportunities for Undergraduate Women Scholarship

Based on the success of AANA Midwest Chapter sponsored undergraduate scholarship program (<https://odaa.iisc.ac.in/iisc-aana-midwest-chapter-fellowship-for-women-in-science/>) that resulted in a significant increase in women students enrolment in the Science degree programs, we decided to continue collecting alumni donations to sustain the women scholarship program. We are extremely grateful to our Chapter members for their generous contributions in 2022. With a wider campaign, we hope to increase the number of fellowships, thus supporting and inspiring many more young women scientists for years to come.

Midwest Chapter Annual Gathering in Chicago on June 17, 2023

The Executive Committee of the IISc ANNA Midwest Chapter is pleased to invite fellow alumni brothers and sisters to an enriching in-person meeting and social gathering in Chicago, USA on Saturday, June 17th, 2023, at 9:30 am – 4:00 pm. Please attend with your family and register via <https://forms.gle/C4c5XTa8sqitRsKq8> **by June 5, 2023**. The event will take place at: *Vivekananda Vedanta Society of Chicago*, 14630 S. Lemont Road, Homer Glen, IL 60491.

Program

09:30 – 10:00	Meet and Greet over Tea/Coffee/Breakfast
10:00 – 10:10	Welcome Address and Briefings on 2022 Activities
10:10 – 10:30	Message from IISc – Dr. Phaneendra Yalavarthy, Chair, Office of Development Alumni Affairs
10:30 – 11:00	Keynote Talk – “Education: The Panacea of All Evils” – Swami Ishatmananda, President, Vivekananda Vedanta Society of Chicago
11:30 – 12:30	Panel Discussions – “AI for Social Good”
12:30 – 13:00	Women Scholarships – Fundraising Plans for 2023
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch
14:00 – 15:00	Panel Discussions – “Health and Wellness Management”
15:00 – 15:30	Cultural Program
15:30 – 15:35	Vote of Thanks
15:35 – 16:00	High Tea

Report on AANA National Meeting in Atlanta on August 26-27, 2022

The National meeting of IISc Alumni Association of North America (AANA) was held on August 26-27, 2022 in Atlanta, Georgia, USA. The theme of the two-day meeting-cum-conference was ‘*Advances in Science and Technology*’ with the main objective of bringing together many of the IISc Alumni from the US, particularly Eastern region. The meeting was inaugurated by Dr. Rama Chellappa and Ms. Mrinalini Lakshminarayan (Co-Chairs, AANA Board of Directors) and Dr. Kamallesh Ruppia, Convenor of the conference. Dr. Sethuraman Panchanathan (Director, National Science Foundation) delivered the Plenary Lecture, which was very informative and vibrant. Dr. Govindan Rangarajan (Director, IISc) dedicated his time to attend the conference and delivered a keynote lecture by sharing the impressive growth and magnificent plans to establish a medical school at IISc. The new IISc-Emory University collaboration and the importance on developing a Medical Research Institute were well explained by Drs. Amara Rama Rao, Rafi Ahmed, and Nikhil Singla. Additionally, Dr. Tummala Rao presented India’s vision for Electronics R&D and the role of IISc.

The conference had three sessions with highly respected and talented speakers as panelists and subject matter experts as moderators. Session 1 on Health and Biological Sciences was moderated by Drs. Sampath Ramachandiran, and Ramireddy Bommireddy. The panelists Drs. Sooryanarayana Varambally, Periasamy Selvaraj, and Amara Rama Rao led a very engaging discussion covering cancer biology and vaccine science. Session 2 (Concept to Market & Entrepreneurship), moderated by Ms. Mrinalini Lakshminarayan and Ms. Aparna Kasani, was very thought-provoking with industry experts Dr. Vijay Chandru, Selva Nataraj, and Rita Khanna as the panelists. Session 3 (AI & Machine Learning) was moderated by Drs. Rama Chellappa and Sajal Das. This panel, although the last event of the conference, attracted great attention as the topic of AI bridges all Science and Technology areas. The panelists for AI & ML were Drs. Nageswara Rao, Uma Kishore Ramachandiran, Ashok Goel, Anant Madabushi, and Ms. Vasuki Arumugam.

At the tail end of COVID-19 season, having 70 participants was impressive. The conference organizers were thankful to the Georgia Institute of Technology for providing their state-of-the-art conference facility.

Membership Outreach

The Midwest Chapter reached out to several constituencies both to inform alumni about the rejuvenation of IISc Alumni engagement in the region and to enhance the membership list that was received from the prior Midwest leadership team. These activities were led by Vasuki Arumugam in Chicago and supported by several alumni including Shivakumar Sastry in Cleveland/Akron area. A new website activity was initiated. Vasuki represents our Chapter to the AANA's communications and website team.

Initial discussions and conversations with fellow alumni indicate a strong preference for activities that will allow the alumni to have meaningful interactions and social gatherings to complement their career interests. Talks by highly visible speakers that also allow ample opportunities for the Chapter members to interact with the speakers would be very welcome and create a community that can contribute back to our Alma Mater and support new generations of students in finding exciting career opportunities and settling down in the Midwest region.

We welcome new volunteers with fresh perspectives to help with outreach activities.

IIScAANA is a 501c(3) organization (<http://www.iiscaana.org/>) and the Midwest Chapter is one of the active chapters of the organization. While ordinary membership is free, we encourage the alumni to become Life members with a one-time donation of \$500. Many IISc alums have made generous donations to help with various causes connected to our mission, via IIScAANA. If you wish to contribute to activities specific for the IIScAANA Midwest chapter, please demarcate your donation as such and send them online <http://www.iiscaana.org/donation/> or offline to:

“Indian Institute of Science Alumni Association North America”
897 Independence Ave, 4C
Mountain View, CA 94043
Phone: +1 (650) 965-2500
Email: info@www.iiscaana.org

Executive Committee Members

Name	Role	IISc Connection	Affiliation
Sajal Das sdas@mst.edu	President	1985 M.E., Computer Science & Automation	Missouri Univ. of Science & Tech.
Ravi Anupindi anupindi@umich.edu	Vice President	1984 M.E., Computer Science & Automation	Univ. Michigan, Ann Arbor
Dilip Das dilipdas.stl@gmail.com	Secretary/Convenor	1993 M.Sc. Eng., Management	Bayer/Monsanto, St. Louis, MO
Viswanathan Natarajan visnatar@uic.edu	Treasurer/Fundraiser	1975 Ph.D., Biochemistry	Univ of Illinois Chicago
Raghu Pandurangi raghuuaa66@yahoo.com	Fundraising/Event Coordinator	1986 Ph.D., Chemistry	Sci-Engi-Medco Solutions Inc. (SEMCO) and Amplexi-LLC, St. Charles, MO
Ramaswamy Subramanian subram68@purdue.edu	Fundraising/Event Coordinator	1992 Ph.D., Molecular Biophysics	Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana
Vasuki Arumugam vasupras@icloud.com	Website	1995, M.Sc. Eng., ECE	Blue Cross Blue Shield, Chicago
Subhasish Mohanty subhasishmohanty.iisc@gmail.com	Website	2002, M.Sc. Eng., Aerospace Eng.	Navistar, Chicago
Murali Ghantasala m.ghantasala@wmich.edu	Membership Drive/ Outreach	1987 M.Sc. Eng., 1993 Ph.D., Instrumentation	Western Michigan Univ., Kalamazoo
Dharma Pally dpally@uic.edu	Membership Drive/ Outreach	2021 Ph.D., Molecular Reproduction, Development and Genetics	University of Illinois Chicago
Tamal Dey tamaldey@purdue.edu	Newsletter	1987 M.E., Computer Science & Automation	Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana
Manashi Nath nathm@mst.edu	Newsletter	1999 M.S., 2004 Ph.D., Chemistry	Missouri Univ. of Science & Tech.
Mrinalini Chatta Rao meenarao@uic.edu	Advisor	1972 Diploma, Biochemistry	University of Illinois Chicago