
Envisioning Tomorrow's University — Ahmedabad Visioning Workshop

MSME Hall, Entrepreneurship Development Institute of India (EDII), Ahmedabad, Gujarat | 13
September 2025 | National Visioning Conference

1. Overview

The Ahmedabad visioning workshop, hosted at EDII, brought together a distinguished group of vice chancellors, deans, directors, senior faculty, and industry leaders from premier institutions such as EDII, IIT Gandhinagar, NID, MICA, PDEU, NIFT, Gujarat University, GNLU, Nirma University, Ahmedabad University and others. Anchored within MIT WPU–Goa's National Visioning Conference, the workshop treated the university not as a static institution but as an evolving, co-created response to AI, climate change, demographic shifts, and widening inequalities.

Through intense plenary discussions and thematic dialogues, participants explored how to move from conventional, siloed higher education toward a transdisciplinary, data-informed, and socially rooted “Global Indian University.” The conversations emphasised institutional purpose, culture, governance, and partnerships, while foregrounding human values, imagination, and community engagement as core to future-ready universities.

2. Key Highlights

- Reframing the central question from “What do we teach?” to “Why should a university exist at all?” and whether it is a teaching or learning institution.
- Strong call for market-fit, transdisciplinary research that is deeply connected to regulation, industry, and societal needs.
- Recognition that student attention spans, shallow reading, and memory outsourcing demand a redesign of pedagogy, not just more content.
- Emphasis on culture-led governance where autonomy, empathy, and faculty well-being are prerequisites for any structural reform.
- A “multiversity” vision that adds the local community as a fourth helix alongside government, industry, and academia.
- Reassertion that global stature requires not only mobility and MoUs, but ethics, imagination, and sustainability of the human experience at the core.

3. Objectives of the Workshop

- Reposition higher education for evolving societal expectations
- Advance transdisciplinary curriculum and pedagogy
- Integrate technology & AI for academic transformation
- Strengthen governance and academic ecosystems
- Expand India's global academic footprint

4. Participants & Institutions

The workshop convened senior leaders and faculty from:

Sr No.	Name of Participants	Designation	Name University/Institute
1	Dr. Piyush Kumar Sinha	Senior Visiting Professor	Entrepreneurship Development Institute of India
2	Dr. Praveen Nahar	Discipline Faculty (Product Design); Former Director, NID	National Institute of Design
3	Dr. A.K.S Suryavanshi	Director	Pandit Deendayal Energy University
4	Dr. Githa Heggde	Professor, Dean and Principal	MICA
5	Dr. Sanjay P. Chauhan	Professor	Gujarat Technological University
6	Dr. Jyoti S. Pareek	Professor	Gujarat University
7	Dr. Pramod Paliwal	Professor	Pandit Deendayal Energy University
8	Dr. Nigam Dave	Professor	Pandit Deendayal Energy University
9	Dr. Bhaskar Datta	Professor	Indian Institute of Technology Gandhinagar
10	Dr. Sandip Solanki	Professor	Adani University
11	Dr. Amit Kumar Sinha	Activity Vice-Chairperson (Education) Discipline Faculty	National Institute of Design
12	Dr. Saurabh Anand	Associate Professor	Gujarat National Law University
13	Dr. U T Rao	Associate Professor	MICA
14	Dr. Jignesh Khakhar	Associate Professor	National Institute of Design
15	Dr. Pankaj Khanna	Associate Professor	Indian Institute of Technology Gandhinagar
16	Dr. Sudhanshu Sharma	Associate Professor	Indian Institute of Technology Gandhinagar
17	Dr. Manish Bhargava	Associate Professor	National Institute of Fashion Technology
18	Dr. Pranav Saraswat	Associate Professor	NIRMA University
19	Dr. Niteesh Kumar Upadhyay	Associate Professor	Dhirubhai Ambani University
20	Dr. Alok Shukla	Assistant Professor	Ahmedabad University
21	Dr. Asha Verma	Assistant Professor	Gujarat National Law University
22	Dr. Madhav K. Pathak	Assistant Professor	Indian Institute of Technology Gandhinagar
23	Mr. Hardik Gandhi	Director	Kalpvrksh Wealth Private Limited

Convener: Prof. Dr. Deependra Sharma, Dean , School of Business, MIT WPU

The workshop brought together a diverse mix of university leaders, faculty, researchers, and industry practitioners engaged in transdisciplinary and governance reform across Gujarat and beyond.

5. Thematic Insights

Theme 1: Evolving Higher Education Ecosystem & Stakeholder Expectations

Participants revisited the foundational purpose of universities, questioning inherited colonial models and grade-driven systems in a digital, AI-shaped world. Speakers highlighted declining attention spans, shallow reading, and outsourcing of memory as systemic issues requiring redesigned pedagogy and institutional support. There was a strong push for market- and society-fit research, linking technology, management, and law to regulation and real-world problem solving. Discussions stressed global competitiveness through better funding, state-of-the-art facilities, flexible hiring, and campus appeal, while foregrounding empathy and faculty well-being as non-negotiable.

Theme 2: Transdisciplinary Curriculum Development & Pedagogy

Transdisciplinarity was framed as problem-driven integration of disciplines, demanding cross-institutional collaboration rather than isolated program design. Examples from IIT Gandhinagar, PDEU, MICA and others showcased project-based learning ecosystems—Tinkering/Maker labs, creative learning centres, and startup incubators. The “Head–Hand–Heart” idea (knowledge, hands-on practice, empathy) was proposed as a guiding framework for curriculum and assessment. Participants argued for a curriculum arc moving from foundational skills to thematic clusters, methods toolkits, and capstone field immersions, supported by case-based and co-taught courses.

Theme 3: Institutional Governance for Transdisciplinary Education

Governance was described as the “how” of transdisciplinarity, with culture and leadership seen as the biggest levers for change. Contributors stressed the need for adaptive, layered governance—macro councils for policy and accreditation, and empowered micro-level units for curriculum and pedagogy. There was a clear call for regulatory agility within NEP/UGC frameworks, while preserving institutional identity and disciplinary depth. Industry-integrated governance, including discipline coordinators, Centers of Excellence, and external advisory boards, was highlighted as critical to making transdisciplinarity durable.

Theme 4: Roadmap for a Global Indian University

The roadmap prioritized human attributes—ethics, imagination, social justice, professionalism, and empathy—over mere program proliferation. Sustainability was widened to the “sustainability of the human experience”, embedding purpose, dignity, and non-objectification of people into university design. The idea of a “multiversity” was revived, adding the local community as a co-owner of the campus and its problem-solving agenda. Participants emphasised student-centricity with rigor, mental health support, alumni pipelines, cultural readiness for global mobility, and international faculty and partnerships for true global stature.

6. Key Takeaways

- Universities must move from content delivery to learning ecosystems, re-articulating their purpose in a tech-reshaped, unequal world.
- Transdisciplinary, experiential curricula anchored in real problems, labs, and case-based learning are central to future-ready education.

- Culture-led, adaptive governance with empowered faculty, regulatory agility, and strong industry integration is essential for sustained transformation.
- The “Global Indian University” must be human-centred, balancing flexibility with professionalism and rigor, and embedding ethics, imagination, and social justice.
- Community engagement and multi-stakeholder co-creation transform universities into multiversities, strengthening societal impact and legitimacy.

7. Photo Gallery



Panel on Evolving Higher Education Ecosystem – Senior leaders from EDII, IIT Gandhinagar, NID, and MICA in a moderated discussion on the changing purpose of universities.



Transdisciplinary Curriculum & Pedagogy Session – Delegates deliberating around a thematic board on Head–Hand–Heart and project-based learning models.



Group Photograph of Delegates – Collective photo of participating vice chancellors, directors, deans, faculty, and industry representatives at MSME Hall, EDII, Ahmedabad.